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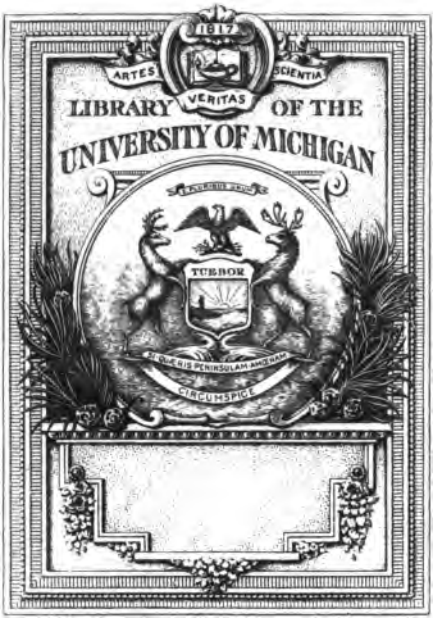
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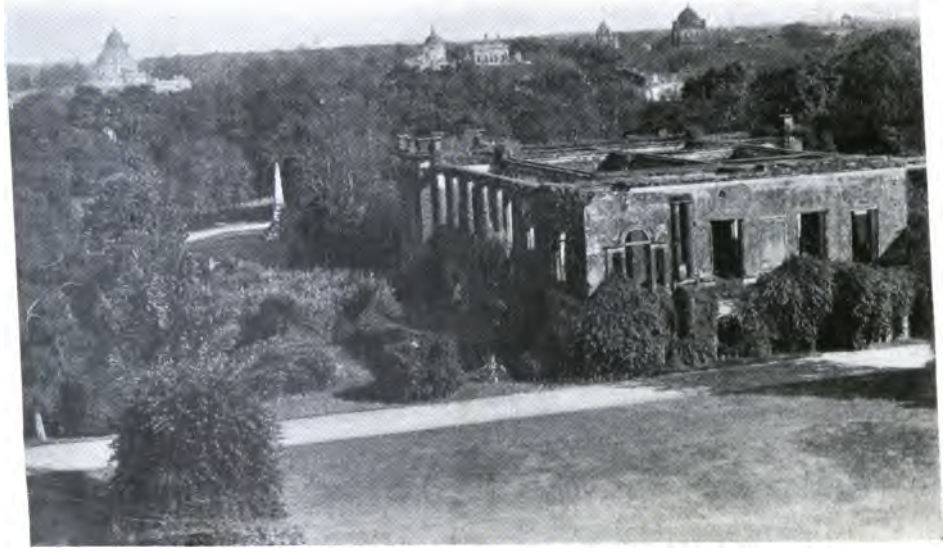
# MY GARDEN IN THE CITY OF GARDENS



THE CITY OF GARDENS

Cuthell, Edith R.

# MY GARDEN IN THE CITY OF GARDENS

A MEMORY WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

JOHN LANE . THE BODLEY HEAD
LONDON & NEW YORK . MDCCCCV

WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LTD., LONDON AND BECCLES.

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*To Him who made,*

*and*

*Her who play'd*

*in*

*My Garden*

"*Nunc fortunatus sum*"

***Despatch of Major the Hon. J. Dormer, A.D.C., to Sir Colin Campbell after the relief of Lucknow***

Landscape
Helfer
9-17-29
20055

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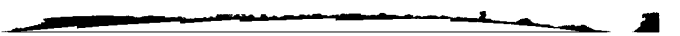

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# OCTOBER

" A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot !
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Fern'd grot—
The veriest school
Of Peace ; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not—
Not God ! In gardens, when the Eve is cool ?
Nay, but I have a sign ;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine."

## OCTOBER

I AM writing in my high-raised verandah. Thence, eagle-eyed, I can oversee the scantily draped mahogany figure—

> "Old Adam's likeness,
> Set to dress this garden,"

and suppress any unlawful sneaking off, at other than stated hours, to "eat bread," or to indulge in the clandestine snooze by the well, or in the hubble-bubble in the plantain-shade, on the part of my *malli*.

For us, Westerns, the Indian year has, as it were, begun. Life is once more endurable; the rains and the hot winds have ceased. Lucky folk have been driven by the early frosts down from "the hills." Luckier folk are back from "leave home." One's social existence is positively sprouting with new conversational crops, sown of contact with Western worlds, or with dignitaries in "high places." Life is no longer bounded by "the station."

Scotched for awhile are the fever and the cholera fiends. Punkahs are put away, and their pullers have returned to their native

villages to enjoy a well-earned affluence. The mosquito nets are folded by ; open wide all day stands the many-doored bungalow. Only on the sunny side of the house do I close the green shutters at noontide, and the drawing-room does not rise above 76°. I play tennis from seven to eight in the mornings, and drive in the evening in a coat, for the early and late hours are foggy and chill.

"Paget, M.P.," has landed at Bombay, and has travelled up-country as far as the Taj. I warrant he is writing home how delicious is the climate of India, and girding at us because we "thought scorn of that pleasant land!"

A present the Wild Man of the Woods has brought me back from Kashmir makes me feel quite English-autumnal—namely, a *mauna* (eighty pounds) of wild walnuts from the forests.

At this time of year my verandah serves me for a drawing-room. Between each pillar it is enclosed with bamboo trellis, called *jaffri* work. This answers the twofold purpose of tempering the outside glare to the rooms within, and of supporting the creepers, which are now rapidly running up and clothing it from the beds below. Inside, against the wall of the house, stand flower-pots on stages, wherein flourish palms and ferns, and my English seedlings, coming on

fast. But it is a case of Darwinian survival. Most of the seeds sent out to me weeks ago, in tins, arrived mildewy and spoilt.

The verandah is spread with Chinese matting and littered with armchairs. India is the land of loll. There are chairs for each sex and size —long bamboo couch chairs ; small grass chairs, cretonne-clad, corresponding to wicker ones in England ; heavy, dark teak, or mahogany chairs, with wide cane seat and tall curling backs, monsters, with great flat wooden arms splayed out to receive the Sahib's extended legs when he is aweary, and with a hole in them to contain his peg tumbler when he is a-thirst.

The verandah is full of life—captive and free. In a cage ringdoves coo a soft drone to the hoarse and discordant quartette of parrots, perched on iron rings hanging from the roof—green, scarlet, and plum, dabs of brilliant colour against the prevailing greenery.

Captive, behind trellis-work at the end of the verandah, stalk the dignified white paddy birds, "blind idiots," the Tamils call them. Happily they are also practically dumb.

My little *chitel* (spotted deer), a dainty pet, is tethered to a tree just below the verandah, where he inhabits a little bamboo shed. He bleats a little, when the sweeper, who feeds all

the pets, brings him his handful of *gram* and grass.

Of wild life, squirrels haunt my verandah—palm squirrels clad in thick grey fur trimmed round with darker rings and stripes. They carry an important bottle-brush ringed tail, and do a great deal of talking with it amongst themselves. I like their dear little trick of cleaning their inquisitive little faces and beady black eyes with their tiny hands.

> "The squirrel is ubiquitous, inquisitive, predatory,
> Oft scared, as oft returns, a most voracious kind."

Failing to find any crumbs in the corner of the verandah where I eat my "little breakfast" at seven, he raids the dessert on the dining-room sideboard, flashing about, with a cheep and a pipe, like a streak of grey lightning, always just out of arms' length. The trap to catch him has yet to be invented.

The "vagrant emmet," black and white, is always with me in the verandah. She uses it as a base, "the parsimonious emmet," and

> "Her foresight and intelligence that make
> The tiny creatures strong by mutual league,"

render her a domestic danger. Did not the sweeper keep a sharp look-out the white ants, with trains of earth-heaps, would sap through

the ever-open window-doors into the rooms, and stealthily demolish the pictures on the walls and the books on the tables. For anything literary or pictorial seems peculiarly to appeal to the white ant. His black cousin infests the verandah, but is less destructive.

In the short, short twilight, when the sun, a crimson ball, has sunk behind the mango grove which edges the parade ground and bounds life on the west, other and less pleasant life pervades the verandah. Mingling with the hum of voices from the servants' houses, where they are cooking their evening meal over the cow-dung fire which odorizes the heavy air, rising above the distant tootle from the band-stand in the Prophet's Garden, comes the ominous baritone obligato-recitative as—

> "With drowsy song,
> The grey fly wound his sullen horn along."

Little recked Kirke White, however, of the Indian mosquito. Milton was nearer the mark with his—

> "Grey fly winds her sultry horn."

But both sang of, to them, "far-off unhappy things."

The mosquito is the price I pay for my bravery of greenery and colour in the verandah.

So comes it that I inhabit it chiefly at early morn, and at noonday.

Other and divers plagues haunt it in the dusk and dark. In the roof dwell rats and bandicoots. Their hurry-scurry wakes me o' nights. I can protect my edibles against their depredations, but I am powerless to dislodge them from their lofty fastness.

Occasionally, horror of horrors, a musk rat flits through the dining-room. Behind him he leaves an awful and enduring stench—worse than any oil-car. I can track him to the side-board, where he sniffed round the biscuit tin. It is days ere I can quite obliterate that visit!

Hitherto I have noticed no gentle little mongoose come sniffing inquisitively about the verandah. Such a caller would alarm me. Quiet little creature that he is, so easily made a pet, the mongoose comes seeking for snakes! With the utmost courage and ingenuity, he deftly administers one snap on their skulls, which ends their career. I have no wish for him to find my verandah a happy hunting-ground for *crait*s and cobras.

Jumping off my horse last evening on to the verandah steps, I nearly trod on a toad—a dark toad, with the erect head and peculiar agility which seems to me to mark the Indian species.

He evidently appreciated the cool and the damp and the insect life under the flower-stands. But I must admonish the sweeper. For snakes come in quest of toads—to eat them.

A DEAD level of an acre or two, my garden is approached by a gateless aperture in the bank which surrounds it, to the road. On the bank grows a hedge of phulæa, *Acacia modesta*, of *Agave americana*, and of aloes. One gate-post, for the guidance of callers, bears our name-board. The drive circles round a group of shrubs to the verandah steps. To the left lies the garden proper. Close up to my bedroom verandah the orange trees grow thick. Here the *chitel* has his home, and here have I made a tiny pool, under the orange shade, edged with ferns, for this is the cool side of the house. Already the big bull frogs have found it out, and are quite garrulous about its charms.

"The croaking of frogs," said Luther, "edifieth nothing at all. It is mere sophistry and fruitless." He really might have been referring to the exponents of some of the new "isms" of nowadays.

A straight path leads from the drive through the garden. Under the largest lives Bunda, the pet (?) monkey, his home, a box. He is chained to the trunk, and delights in springing out at the unwary skirt passing by.

I have laid out the garden severely in square

sunken beds. Of lawn there is not a trace. Smoothed dry mud takes its place. Such expensive luxuries as grass plots pertain only to the high functionaries who dwell more permanently than ourselves in Government Houses and the like. Round each bed, and up and down each side of the walk, runs a tiny watercourse, down which, each morn and eve, the water flows from the well. The gardener goes round with his spade, opens the little embankment, and floods each bed in turn.

Beyond, in the corner of the compound, near the vegetable beds, is the well—the heart, the life-source of my garden. Morning and evening the great cream-coloured humped bullocks labour up and down an inclined plane, drawing up the water in a kind of square bag made of the skin of one of their deceased relatives, and hanging on an iron ring, and which the gardener upsets into the main runnel. Grouped around the well, to imbibe every particle of moisture, grow the broad-leaved plantains—bananas we call them in Covent Garden and on the coster barrows—mysterious, with clusters of spiky fruit, which make such excellent fritters.

Feathering round the well, too, waves the bamboo—the wonderful bamboo—which flowers

but once in thirty years, and when it has flowered, dies, attracting to its funeral feast all the fowls of the air, a babel of revellers, showering about them, as they perch, the ripened grain, on rodents and on monkeys, and, in wild jungle parts, even on the wild boar and the deer.

Where there is a perpetual slop, from the emptying of the bullock-skin, have I planted a pearl of great price—a watercress bed. With much care I can keep it going all the cold weather. How, out here, one prizes the common things of everyday "home" life!

On the cool side of the house I am tending, with immense difficulty, a trellised vine, which, in June, I hope, *may* produce some grapes, for is it not manured with bullocks' blood from the slaughter-house! Just now, however, I am buying grapes for dessert, delicious, stoneless muscats, neatly packed singly in cotton wool in small wood boxes, which are brought down from Turkistan, the land of the vine, by sheepskin-clad Afghan horse-dealers, along with Persian pussy-cats and Cabooli mares. The winter the Captain Sahib spent in Khandahar, he relates how they had thirteen different sorts of grapes on his mess-table for breakfast. The stonelessness of these Cabool grapes is artificial.

An incision about eight inches long is cut in the wood of the trained vines, the pith is removed, and the wood bound up again, with the result that the grapes are stoneless.

Beyond the *pergola* are fruit trees—guavas, mango, oranges, and, here and there, an aloe, tall, prickly, chary of its yellow-white blooms, a plant to be respected if not admired. "Adam's needle" is the old English name, for it is traditionally reputed to have been used by Adam in his earliest sartorial efforts.

THIS is a busy month in the garden. The rains have long ceased, and the well-watered world is bursting into bloom. I have been sowing my cold-weather seeds, and have got my pansies, mignonette, and stocks in early.

My geranium plants in pots, which Ida kindly summered for me in the hills, have returned to me after an adventurous journey by train, bullock-cart, and coolie head, over plain and river and mountain, safe and sound, but much overgrown. There have been the cuttings to take, and to set out in new, rich earth, and the old straggling plants to cut back. They have done well, but they cannot stand a hot weather in the plains. The single and double scarlet, the pink, salmony-white, and the ivy-leaved, have done best.

I have had the chrysanthemums repotted and well watered with liquid manure. In the verandah the pots of petunias, verbenas, and pinks have been crying aloud for new habitations and fresh earth. I find a mixture of old stable litter and good leaf mould the best for the chrysanthemums. The large pots have got so washed out with the rains.

In the kitchen garden the gardener has been

busy sowing his succession of cold-weather vegetables, beginning early with his first peas, and sowing the herbs—thyme, etc.—which one missed so during the hot weather.

Glorious is the wealth of colour in tree and shrub and creeper now. The *Hibiscus mutábilis*, twenty feet high, has covered itself all over with large pink-and-white blooms, exactly like paper flowers! The *Bauhinia accuminata* is graceful, with its pendulous branches of pointed divided leaves, with their large loose panicles of whitish and pale pink. The *Buddleias*, with their orange bells, are rampant. So are the *Lautanas*. About the stone pillars and *jaffri* work of the verandah are clambering the *béla bél* Jasmine; the white-flowered *Bona Nox*, or "Evening Glory" *Ipomea;* the *Ipomea grandiflora*, and the *Passiflora cærulea*, the handsome blue passion flower; the scarlet cypress vine (*Quamoclit*); the star *Ipomea* (*coccinea*), a blaze of scarlet; the lilac Railway creeper (*Pulchella*), and the blue-and-white *Limbata*.

The bougainvillas we have always with us in flower. Some eight feet high, thriving in the very eye of the sun, this shrub forms an effective, if rather vulgar, mass of colour, maroony purple, against the dark green of

the orange trees. I have three kinds, the *B. splendens*, the very handsome *B. spectabilis*, and the *B. glabra*, magenta and pale pink.

I am fond of the bougainvillas, not only for their gift of colour, but also for their association's sake. I like to think of the intrepid soldier, sailor, explorer, and author, whose name they bear, given in his honour by Commerson, the navigator, on his voyage round the world. A gallant specimen he of the old noblesse, Montcalm's trusted lieutenant, and the diarist of his campaigns against the English in the New World. It was De Bougainville who was twice sent by Montcalm to offer terms to the luckless Munro before the attack on Fort William Henry ; it was De Bougainville who tried to prevent the awful massacre of the prisoners by the Indians that ensued. He was wounded at Abercromby's disastrous muddle of Ticonderoga. When the tide turned against the French, and they were driven to bay in Canada, De Bougainville was sent by Montcalm to hold the point Cap Rouge, where ended the seven miles of cliff which made Quebec impregnable. There he entrenched himself and remained, unaware that Wolfe had stealthily climbed to the Heights of Abraham. Montcalm expected help from his faithful De

Bougainville, but the 48th held the latter in check, and in ignorance of the disaster which was befalling his general. For five days De Bougainville lay like a watch-dog at the post assigned him, for five days after Montcalm's defeat and death. Then Lévis, coming round with troops, picked him up, but only when within fifteen miles of Quebec did they hear that it had fallen. A year later De Bougainville stood as a prisoner of war on the Island of Montreal, the Canadas lost to France. He was only thirty, but his fighting days were over. He took to sailoring, commanded the *La Boudeuse* frigate, and for four years went round the world, surveying and exploring; wrote a book about it, and became a great traveller.

I have discovered a good way of propagating the bougainvillas. I cut a flower-pot in half, fill it with earth, and fix it round a branch. After a while the branch forms roots in the pot, and then I cut it off below the pot, take it out, and, behold! a young plant.

As regards the colouring of the bougainvilla, it may be mentioned that it is the leaves, not the flowers, which give it its glorious hues.

The drawing-room is now gay with balsams, asters, nasturtiums, and chrysanthemums. These I arrange myself, as the native gardener's

idea of a bouquet is too stiff for words. It would appear incredible that any one could arrange nasturtiums formally; yet the *malli* contrives to do it. No flower lends itself so easily to artistic treatment—and then its colour, and the variety of its hue! It is an old, old flower in gardens of England. This is what they found to write about it, what time they were busy beheading their king!

"Nasturces," says the "Compleat Gard'ner" of 1649, "the Leaf of it is pretty large, and the Flower of an Orange Colour; the figure of the seed is a little pyramidical divided by *ribs*, having all its superficies engraven, and wrought all over, being of a gray colour inclined to light."

It is pleasant to think that in that year in England there lived placid souls who could think of their gardens!

My balsams are very fine. "July," says old Parkinson, apothecary and King's Herbist, writing in 1640, "doth glory in the Balsam."

But here October. Raised from English seed the climate seems to suit them wondrously. Indeed, the balsam came originally from the Indies in the sixteenth century.

The Wild Man of the Woods arrived to call the other morning, clad in his latest Piccadilly suit. As he passed through the verandah

he glanced at my balsams, and vouchsafed the remark that these were the flowers bears got drunk on.

For a moment I could recollect no dipsomania tendencies on the part of the ursine tribe, or predilection for aught save the porridge, of which the Three—in the legend that Some one is never tired of hearing told—so lamented the untoward disappearance. But this was the Wild Man's story.

Shooting once in a high, little-known valley under the Nanda Devi range, he had nearly lost his cook by a bear in a wild balsam crop. It was the *Balsamia impatiens*, which grows eight feet high round camping-places of the Tibetan sheep and goat caravans. The seeds are like grain, and fly open when the pods are touched. Hence the name, *impatiens*. The natives, it seems, are partial to them, and get shockingly drugged. On this occasion the Wild Man's cook, a Mussulman from the plains, with a holy horror of the hills and of wild beasts, lost the track. He was groping his way through a high balsam patch, when he suddenly found himself in the arms of a huge black bear with the white horseshoe mark on his chest. Happily Ursus Major was too befuddled to hurt him, and the *chef* "en était quitte pour la peur."

# NOVEMBER

"This pleasure garden, where the sun
Is baffled, by the boughs that weave
Their shade."

## NOVEMBER

IT is deliciously cool all day now! A lovely breeze blows through the open house, and the sun is really only oppressively powerful for four hours. I am out-of-doors all day, and have had to give up washing dresses, and have started a blanket at night.

I have been busy sowing my *nemophila* seed; they are so effective, and I am trying to keep up successive sowings from the rainy season till the middle of December. They are a good deal of trouble, but they well repay it.

"Blot," my white terrier, is dead. Of pure and ancient English pedigree, though of Indian birth, he was very good to look upon, and sweet to know. But, alas! the hot weather and the climate generally has proved too much for him. After ailing some weeks of liver, he has died—young.

Four different kinds of vegetables for dinner last night were a welcome sign that the cold weather has really set in. They were cauliflowers, turnips, carrots, and asparagus. We might have had *brinjals*, too, and ladies' fingers,

but one is a little tired of them, as they are with us all the hot weather and the rains. The *brinjal* is the egg-fruit, of dark green exterior and pulpy within. It is boiled, split open, and fried in breadcrumbs, and only the inside is eaten. Ladies' fingers are insipid and uninteresting, a *pis aller* in the rains. They take their name from their shape, and are very succulent.

TWO evenings ago we went for a drive round by the Botanical Gardens. These lie in an immense stretch of ornamental grass, carefully watered and forested, behind the Civil Lines. After the Third Relief, the native city, which was some twenty miles in circumference, was much demolished and reduced, and the environs laid out in drives with trees.

In the midst of the gardens rises a square white marble summer-house, with flights of steps. It was brought from the great palace. "Cæsar's Garden," is called a *bâradari*, and is a fine specimen of Moghul architecture. The tesselated floor is excellent for dancing. Round the *bâradari* was some good ribbon-gardening, with the beds intersected with tiny gravel paths. The verbenas, nasturtiums, and heart's-ease I thought very good, but the geraniums inferior.

The roses were coming out in the little set garden, trailing over the *jaffri* work and in the hedges, luxuriant, glowing, a vision of beauty, the real flower of the East, in the cold weather. For a rose cannot stand the tropical sun.

I always think of the Roumanian legend, how the sun, surprising a lovely princess at her morning dip in the sea, kissed her, and twice forgot to move on. Night, advancing, found him in her way. Since then the sun changed the princess into a rose. And that is why the rose always hangs her head and blushes when the sun gazes down upon her.

Down here, in the plains, the rose blooms only in gardens, carefully tended. In the Himalayas it is wild.

On our way home we looked in at the Garden of Alexandra. Once a palace of Wajid Ali Shah, built for a favourite Mahal, it is now a ruin, enclosed in a high wall, which was carefully loopholed and strongly held by the rebels in November, 1857. It was gallantly captured by Captain Wolseley's company of the 90th, the 93rd Highlanders, and the 4th Punjaub Rifles. The inside, gloomy enough in appearance and in memories—for in the courtyard some two thousand mutineers were cut to pieces—this November afternoon was a glory of beautiful gardening, as are all the Lakhnao ruins. A brilliant plumbago hedge in full bloom ran along the road under the breached and battered walls, which were all aglow with purple and

yellow and scarlet—bougainvilla, alamanda, and convolvolus.

Driving home it turned quite chilly, and I was glad to put on a coat between five and six. The drawing-room was only 78° all day.

THE snipe have come in! The Captain Sahib and his brother *shikaris* are as excited as I am when the English mail arrives. The annual advent to these climes of the dainty little long-billed brown bird sends a flutter through their *weidmann* breasts. Most mysterious is this migration of the snipe. No one yet seems to have probed their goings and their comings—whence they are and whither wending. In the *jhils* of Northern India, on the bogs of Ireland, and in the swamps of Australia, they appear early in November—that is to say, at the beginning of winter in one hemisphere, and at the beginning of summer in the other. Moreover, the Indian snipe is more erratic still. He comes to Southern India in September while it is still very hot. The mystery is, where are the snipe between May and September, and why do they annually wing away to other climes? No one has yet satisfactorily given an account of their migrations. Alone the lighthousemen in the oceans mark their flight.

Directly the glad news about the snipe reached the Captain Sahib he promptly made arrangements, under Khoodha Bux's auspices,

with Our Paddy to shoot the Red Road *jhil* on the morrow. I was to be allowed to come too and ride about with them, provided I made myself unobtrusive. Khoodha Bux was in command. He is the *shikari*, shared between Our Paddy and the Captain Sahib, a wiry, thin, active young fellow, with the eye and the keenness of a hawk, and considerable wood-craft (if, indeed, one may so call it in a land where the sport is not all in forests), and in all matters pertaining to sport their guide, philosopher, and friend.

We drove out in the early, early morning. The air was chill, and I was glad of a coat over my habit. "Reveillé" was sounding in barracks, but no one seemed awake except a crow or two cawing sleepily on the roof. Even the old *chokedar*, our private policeman, retained to keep watch and ward over our demesne, had evidently only just aroused from his illicit slumbers in a corner of the verandah.

A few natives, shrouded like corpses in their blankets, were flitting down the Mall in the morning mist; a jackal stole across the road going home to bed. But, once outside cantonments, and on the straight, white, tree-bordered road, we were perpetually being blocked by

trains of bullock-carts rumbling into the railway laden with bales of cotton. As the drivers, perched on the top of their loads, were mostly asleep, well wrapped about the head with their blankets, there was always a delay ere they could be induced to turn their slow bullocks out of the road into the deep dust, to let us pass.

After a monotonous drive of some six miles, we came suddenly upon Khoodha Bux squatting in the dust, looking somewhat cold, and surrounded by a ring of half a dozen shrouded coolies, the beaters, my pony standing near.

But the growing light revealed yet another unexpected object. Further down the road, drawn up in the dust, the ponies taken out, stood nothing more nor less than a *dâk gharry*, the common cab of Lakhnao. What was it doing there?

Khoodha Bux explained the mystery, with the nearest approach to mirth he ever permits himself. The *dâk gharry* contained the forms of two sahibs, full length, well wrapped up, sleeping comfortably. When it transpired that these were none other than the Sporting Boy in the "Arden Foresters," and his friend, our latest Globe Trotter, the unholy joy of the Captain Sahib and Our Paddy knew no bounds.

Come out to shoot the *jhil*, had they? Pity to start overnight and then oversleep yourself! Now to be beforehand with them!

I mounted, the others took their guns, and we silently stole away—over fields of low green *dâk* bushes and carefully tilled patches of rising corn, and skirting crops of millet and sugar-cane, to a sun-baked plain. There, across the horizon, as far as eye could see, stretching in a long serpentine line, lay a tangled mixture of mud and morass, or swamp and sedge, with islands of thorn-bushes and clumps of high grass. But the monsoon last season was only partial, and, once outside the zone of river irrigation, it was sad to see how the crops have failed. The *jhil* had shrunk to half its size.

The solemnities now began. Khoodha Bux evoked from the rear the six coolies who had been stalking lugubriously behind us wrapped in dirty cotton sheets, and who, unshrouding themselves, formed line, the Captain Sahib and Our Paddy at either end, and started beating down the sedge and water on the edge of the swamp.

Mindful of my orders to be unobtrusive, I rode at a little distance on *terra firma*, and kept somewhat behind. The sun was now well

up and beginning to make itself felt ; the air was dead still. Suddenly, from out of a tussock of grass in front, rose, with a wild screech like an unoiled lock, a ridiculously small bird. He rose, I say, but instead of flying fair and straight, he made three distinct twists. It seemed to me that one might just as well try and fire at a flash of forked lightning.

Bang ! With a subdued twitter it flew on, but slowly and straight. The next minute it fell dead, and a coolie promptly retrieved it out of the water. I felt proud of my countrymen !

There was no manner of doubt that the snipe were in. They rose, now in wisps of four and five, like a rocket, and scattering like fireworks, now singly—at the Captain Sahib's very feet, as he and his companion slushed along through the swamp—now altogether out of shot. The game-stick in which the spoil dangled by their heads grew more and more crowded.

And so I rode on in the sunshine, watching the sport till the heat grew too much for me, and I turned into a clump of trees a little above the swamp, where, owing to Khoodha Bux's conjuring, a coolie, armed with the breakfast basket, had suddenly hove in sight. Likewise, in the magical way they have, my

own groom had suddenly appeared. So I dismounted, and presently the others joined me. A pretty bag, thirty-five couple of snipe, once up the *jhil;* and some twenty jacks, as they returned down it. Dainty mites these jacks; some people will have it they are a different kind of snipe. The bag contained also some painted snipe. These are, indeed, another species, not so good to eat, being rank, but the cock wears exceedingly beautiful feathers. As we sat down to breakfast the Captain Sahib skinned a cock, and I am to have the feathers to send home for Someone's hat.

We had hardly begun on the inevitable tinned bacon (no one eats the pork of the country, for reasons better left ungiven) when down upon us bore the occupants of the *dâk gharry*, not quite in the best of tempers at having been forestalled. After we had hoped that they had had a good night of it, they unfolded a sad tale. Straight from the bridge table at the Club had they come, not to lose any of the precious morning hours—and this was their reward! We showed them our bag, which seemed to bring them little comfort, and then we preached proverbs at them. It is not the early bird, etc.

WE have had our first green peas for dinner to-day, and very good they were. A small boy has been hired at an infinitesimal wage to reside permanently either on, or under, the guava and orange trees, and to attend to the pea's preservation. For the marauders are so many. There are the green parrots, a shrieking flock, flitting across the garden *en échelon*—a streak of emerald lightning. The writer of the Mahabharata excluded green parrots from an ideal country. "There are," says he, "no parrots there to eat up the grain."

Then there are the crows, Michael Drayton's "envious crow." Solitary, dignified, of infinite cunning, according to the Ettrick Shepherd, they are "down in the devil's book in round hand." By raids among the vegetables they contrive to vary a carnivorous diet sustained by lurking at the pantry door, or hovering in wait for the oblivious cook-boy who bears the dishes from the kitchen-house to the dining-room verandah.

There are the *mynas*—a kind of starling with orange lobes over the ears and a yellow beak—silent, when at work among the peas, but with wonderfully human voices when they do speak.

There are the Seven Sisters, a sad-coloured

troop, addicted to sitting in rows on a branch, as noisy as the *mynas* are dumb.

Last, and least, are the sparrows. "The sparrow," says Martin Luther in his "Colloquia Mensalia," "is a most voracious animal, and does great harm to the crops. The Hebrews call it 'tschirp,' and it should be killed wherever found." But there's the rub. The sparrow no more heeds the hurled boot in the bedroom, or the book in the verandah, than he does the pellet-bow of the pea-boy in the garden.

MY back verandah has been like a butcher's shop. I wonder what my poor demure violets in their pots there thought of it all? For the Captain, by way of an *amende honorable*, has been showing the Sporting Boy in the Arden Foresters, and his friend the Globe Trotter, how to skin and stuff a couple of painted snipe from yesterday's bag. The Captain Sahib is nothing if not a taxidermist, and perhaps his methods, the outcome of much experience and practice, may be worth jotting down here.

If you want to stuff a bird, you must be careful not to shoot it with too large a size charge, or it will be crushed to a jelly, and the skin not worth using. If it is only wounded, press the breast-bone with finger and thumb till it is dead. Then push a piece of cotton wool down the throat, a piece of thread through the nose just above the beak, and make a loop to hold it by. If you find any small wounds, plug them carefully with cotton wool, lest the blood should stain the feathers. If any are blood-stained, pull them out here and there, and smooth all the plumage down carefully. When the bird is brought safely home, you must make up you mind as to whether it should be slit down

the back, or down the breast, or as to whether, in the case of a large-headed bird, a small cut should be made in the throat to skin the head through. The Captain Sahib's implements are few, but to the point, in every sense of the word—a couple of dissecting-knives with celt handles, a pair of pointed scissors, a large fish-hook, and a small gouge for the eyes, being all he requires for the skinning process. For setting-up he uses a file, to give the wires a sharp point, and a pair of compasses to measure the body.

The bird should be placed on its back, and cut open from the top of the breast-bone to within a short distance of the vent. But if the specimen is one remarkable for the beauty of its breast plumage the process should be reversed. The wing-bones should then be broken under the wings, and the bird's skin be removed with the celt handle of the knife, sprinkling the skin as you go with a powder of wood-ash, plaster of Paris, or flour.

(Here let me explain that the term *celt* applied to a handle is derived from the prehistoric flint implements dug up in ancient barrows or tumuli in Europe, and which, being necessarily blunt, have given their names to the blunt bone handles of dissecting-knives.)

If possible, get another person to hold the

bird while you are skinning it, by means of a fish-hook run through the breast-bone, or you can tie the hook to the wall. The neck must be cut through, and likewise the wings where they are broken, and the top joints of the legs. Great care must be used in drawing off the skin down the back, as it is very frequently the most delicate place.

When the head is very much larger than the neck, to remove it, cut the throat lengthways. It is immaterial if the eyes are taken out before the head is skinned, or after, but push the gouge well into the back of the eye to separate the ligament which holds it to the socket. But take care that the gouge does not penetrate the eye, or it will let out the fluid, which often damages the skin. Some people crush the skull slightly to make it come out of the skin more easily, but the Captain Sahib is averse to that proceeding. Remove the brains by taking a piece out of the skull at the back as the neck is cut off. Pull the eyes out of their cavities, and fill up the places with cotton wool soaked in arsenical soap. The skin of head and neck should be thoroughly anointed with arsenical soap, a piece of stick covered with wool be placed in the neck, the end of it put in the hole made in the skull for extracting the brains.

Remove the flesh from the wings as far as you can skin. When you have removed the body, to finish the wings, cut them open from the outside under the large wing feathers, which be careful not to detach from the large bone. Remove all the meat most carefully, and anoint the wings with arsenical soap.

Skin the legs as far down as you can, remove the flesh, anoint the skin with arsenical soap, and cover them with paper to prevent them damaging the skin. The feet can be left alone, unless they are very large, when they should be cut into and anointed.

If the tail and beak be that of a very large bird, like a peacock, they should be well covered with wood-ash, and scraped till as much of the fat as will come away has been removed. Then they should be freely anointed with arsenical soap, the body filled with wool and paper, not too full, and closed with a couple of stitches across the breast. The feathers should be smoothed, and the bird left in a dry place for a day or two before packing. It should be well wrapped in paper for packing.

Thus far the skin of a bird, as in this case the dainty little painted snipe, which the Sporting Boy in the Arden Foresters is wishful to send home to his own, or some one else's

sister. In the Captain Sahib's practised hands the process for the little snipe has not taken many minutes. In this way he has sent home cured, to be "set up" in England, the lordly peacock, now figuring as a fire-screen ; a whole black partridge, the kind with the white spots, which Someone is wearing as a hat ; many little humming birds, all tail and beak, most tricky and tiresome little creatures to manipulate ; and even a few striped squirrels, whose bushy tails, however, suffered somewhat from the long confinement in the packing.

Occasionally, however, the Captain Sahib "sets up" his own birds, when wishful to preserve for himself some special trophy. One morning, going out shooting early, he passed a tall and stately *Tantalus leucopha* (*nimmer satt*, in German) standing on one leg in a pool, fishing with its long yellow beak. He secured it, its glossy white feathers, tipped with black at the wings, and flecked with rose colour, uninjured. It now stands in my drawing-room, holding a lamp, a triumph of taxidermic art.

The process of setting up is as follows : The skin can lie by for years if properly cured. If, however, it is taken in hand at once, the body and the neck taken out of the bird will serve as a model. The former is copied in tow wound

round with cotton. Through this is run a piece of sharp-pointed wire bent over and fastened at the tail end. It protrudes beyond the body, is wrapped round with tow or wool to imitate the neck, and run up the latter, from which the stick has been removed. The point is run through the skull, bent back, and made fast.

A sharpened wire is run up each leg inside, starting from beneath the foot, and stuck in the body, where it is doubled back. But take care that these wires are exactly in the centre of the body, or the legs will appear too far back.

The body and neck of the bird are now stuffed, but form a straight line. After sewing up the breast or back with a few stitches, with the following manipulation give the right curve to the neck. Bending it back at a little more than a right angle to the body, press with the thumb where the neck joins the body. Then again press with the thumb at the back of the neck, and with the other hand pull the neck forward again. This will give the desired graceful curve.

In a small piece of board drill two holes in the position in which you wish the feet to be. Run the wires of the feet through them, turn them back, and fix them. Push the body

slightly backwards, and at the same time bend the legs at the joints. But if the bird is to be set flying, the legs should not be bent, but run straight out parallel to the body.

On the position of the bird must also appear that of the wings. If it is flying they must be kept stretched out by a wire run through underneath them horizontally, catching each individual feather. If the wings are closed, needle-points are enough to pin them through to the body. The thickness of the wire must depend on the size of the bird. The tail must be fixed with wire.

Last of all, the eyes must be put in. Open the eyelids, and force the eyes far enough into the head, and then carefully manipulate the eyelid to make the eye sit naturally. When a bird is first shot the colour of the eye should be noticed, and matched as nearly as possible when buying the glass eye. We get cases of glass eyes out from England.

A real knowledge of woodcraft and the eye of the naturalist is, of course, wanted to set up birds naturally and artistically. The nature and the habit of the specimen must be taken into account, and its poses in life studied. For instance, a pheasant struts with a stiff neck, the duck's is carried less arched than that of

the snake-headed cormorant so common to the *jhils*.

A careful touching up is necessary when all is finished. The feathers can be arranged with a probe or a needle-point in small birds ; a great improvement is the varnishing of the beak and legs. Artificial rocks can be arranged for a group of birds. They are made out of paper laid on the wood stand on which the birds are fixed, and shaped into the appearance of rock or stones. Over it is poured a hot solution of one part glue, one part whitening, and one part sand, which soon dries very hard ; dried sticks, ferns, grasses, can be added.

Arsenical soap has been alluded to. In a land where there is not a chemist round every corner, we make it ourselves as follows : Camphor, 5 drachms ; arsenic, 4 ounces ; white soap, 4 ounces ; flaked lime, 4 ounces ; mix with a little water into a soft paste.

I HAVE been interrupted writing this morning by a plague of callers. As I was sitting in the verandah, it was impossible to say "the door is closed," the Anglo-Indian euphemism for "not at home."

Calling is a *corvée* under which we English indeed groan in India. It is a "daily round, a common task." We pay "morning calls," literally, as chronicled by Miss Austen, and painted by Mrs. Gaskell, in all their natural artificiality at Cranford. By an idiotic unwritten social law, the "calling shapes," "with sudden visitations daze" us at the hottest noontide hours. At the top of the verandah steps squats old Warsali, the bearer, to show visitors into the drawing-room. He is armed with a Benares brass tray whereon to receive their cards. Every one sends in cards in India, whether their hostess is at home or not, otherwise Warsali and his ilk would make confusion worse confounded by trying to announce European names. The custom has its advantages in this land of bureaucracy, for it enables one to determine beforehand the social position of the new arrivals, and to avoid conversational pitfalls. Occasionally, however, when the mere male calls, for mutual

protection and support, in couples, it requires some astuteness on the part of the hostess to discover, without their knowing it, which is Captain Smith, the talented staff officer, and which Captain Jones, the gifted polo-player.

Like Lady Macbeth, I have a horror of these "compunctuous visitings." All new-comers are in duty bound to call upon older residents, and one is at the beck and call of any one and every one, from twelve to two. The disparity between the sexes in India decrees that "let the man who calleth be the caller," in a large proportion. There is the perfunctory caller, with "visits like an angel's, few and far between;" the shy caller, who makes a regular visitation, during which his hat is apt to undergo visible signs of his embarrassment, who "lingers long," unable to make up his mind when, or how to depart. He always inclines me to emulate the example, and copy the valedictory formula, of a well-known public school head-master who invented a remedy for such a phase of shyness on the part of his youthful breakfast-guests. He was wont, I am told, to rise and lay his hand on their shoulders, murmuring regretfully, "And *must* you go now?"

Finally, there is he who finds "calling so

sweet," that he calls early and calls often, sometimes not wisely, but too well, lingering "long o' Loo" (otherwise Belinda, my charming neighbour behind the millingtonias across the road). In *qui hai* days Belinda would have been termed the "station spin." But now the marriageable maiden is not so rare in a cantonment. Belinda, however, is a very "bright particular star," and as, from my verandah, I watch the patient grooms holding the ponies by the hour outside Belinda's, I reflect that, in the end, it will not be he who called, but he who was chosen.

Though I am not one of those hostesses who, to misquote Dryden, is "she who can call to-day her own," I have this morning been inundated with a perpetual stream of women's new hats and men's latest tweed suits. There is no manner of doubt that the hot weather is over. People are returning fast. I am tired of shaking hands. What would it be if I had an "at home" day?

Of shaking hands, by-the-by, I perceive a new fashion. It has been brought out "from home" by the lucky people just back, along with their new clothes. It came to me with something of a shock when I advanced to greet Amanda, many months missed and mourned, and sought the "touch of a vanished hand."

BELINDA'S GARDEN

UNIV. OF MICH.

I gave myself away in the greeting, and imagined she received me coldly. I sought to grasp her hand on equal terms, but lo! it was here—it was there! I groped in mid air for an extended finger, I found myself confronted by the angle of an elbow—given, in fact, the cold shoulder. But no snub was intended, I found. It was merely the last new and fashionable shake—a wobble, a squeeze, a jerk of the elbow. The shake of the hand has become, I see, the shibboleth of Society. It alters every season, like the men's collars. By their shake ye shall know them. Masonic signs are nothing to it. After all, we merely substitute one social shackle for another. Bowing as a fine art went out with powder. We now only nod. But the intricacies of Society handshaking bid fair to rival those "of the nice conduct of a clouded cane."

But there really is a great deal in the shake of a hand. We study people's character by the shapes of their noses, the loops of their writing, the wrinkles on their palms. When shall we develop sufficient nicety of touch to test them by their handshake? Yet we English have for centuries had special advantages for the study. Shaking hands is a peculiarly British characteristic. In no country, except

perhaps Norway, has this form of salutation been so much in vogue as with us—at least, from Shakespeare's time. We laugh at foreigners, for we know not how to bow, and to kiss we are ashamed. So we go on grasping each other's palms till around the action has sprung up a wealth of simile and allusion unknown in any language but our own.

Recognizing the fact that every one has four fingers and a thumb, it is extraordinary how handshakes vary. They are essentially human, too. Savages do not shake hands. The Japs, the most recently emerged from barbarism, have not as yet adopted the custom. Nor have we heard if "Professor" Garner found it in vogue among the monkey denizens of African forests.

We all know the grip hearty—"Here's my hand." "And mine, too, with my heart in it!"—that squeezes our rings into our flesh and wrings our gouty joints—"the pleasure that's almost a pain." How we shrink from the genial, kindly creature who administers it, as often as not with a pump-handle accompaniment of the arm!

Then there's the confidential, double-barrelled shake, first cousin to the kiss on both cheeks, and which, when given by an adept woman,

never fails to charm—a slow, soft squeeze, with the hands low down and much eye-business intermixed. When, on the stage, I behold the siren thus greet the eligible *jeune premier*, I am instinctively aware that they share a "past" between them, and I tremble for the *ingénue's* happiness. In this form of handshake the palms may be allowed to lie within each other indefinitely, and the male palm may possibly subsequently steal round the lady's waist. Of this form of handshake dear little Mrs. Caramel, our catty-puss hill-beauty, just back from a very successful season at Simree, exhibits excellent examples.

Again, there is that limp, flabby shake of a nerveless hand, that makes one long for the custom to be abolished. It is not pleasant people who shake hands thus. There is a vacuum where their heart should be—cold, unsympathetic mortals, from whom one shrinks to ask a favour, and to whom one would hesitate to air a grievance.

About election times in England, the hand-shake political is in full swing; the candidate's "hands promiscuously applied," the outward and visible sign of the vote of confidence, the first step towards kissing the "specially washed babies." There is no flabbiness about this.

It is cheery, "hail-fellow-well-met," democratic, broad. In days that are no more, the candidate's handshake left something tangible behind it, and the coin of the realm changed hands in a shake. The custom survives in the valedictory grasp which we bestow upon Sir Luke Lancet as we quit his consulting-room. A doctor's handshake is quite unique. There is something of a deformity about the grasp. It resembles that given by those endowed with a malformation, or who have lost a finger—the palm extended horizontally, and the little finger, by dint of long practice, deftly preventing the golden coin from slipping on to the floor.

Again, there is the handshake formal, merely complimentary, like the "yours faithfully" at the end of a business letter, or the "sincerely yours" of one dear friend congratulating another on her engagement to the young man she herself would have liked to marry. This handshake is in vogue between the seconds in a duel, when they have posted the principals and the game is about to begin. It pertains among athletes ere the bayonet is drawn, the sword unsheathed, or the gloves put on which swell out of all recognition the human palm, and is just intended to show there is no ill-feeling. In like manner there have been

historic handshakes, between conqueror and conquered, pardoner and pardoned, no one much the better for them. At spirit-séances there are the ghostly handshakes, like those described in Christmas numbers, cold, clammy, and awe-inspiring, though compounded of an old glove and wet sand. Among these is no change of fashion. The "touch of a vanished hand" is always on the same pattern.

Handshaking plays a great part in the noble art of flirtation. Our grandmothers talked of the language of fans and of flowers. How much more expressive is the length and intensity of the pressure! It graduates from the ephemeral, illegitimate squeeze, hastily given in the lancers, *en passant*, to the all-important, solemn, ratifying grasp, such as Miranda and Ferdinand exchanged.

Norway is the most democratic kingdom under the sun. They have abolished titles, and every one shakes hands with every one else upon the slightest provocation. If you tip the pony-boy or hotel porter, he promptly acknowledges it by a hearty grasp, which is somewhat disconcerting to the haughty Briton. Handshaking in Norway is equivalent to the ubiquitous hand-kissing of Austria.

Up to recent days royalty did not shake

hands with the subject. "Would shake hands with a king upon his throne, and think it kindness to his Majesty," remarks the Republican poet, whose President's fingers are wrung at his White House receptions by all and every. Monarchs were wont to "touch" for healing purposes, but not by way of conferring social distinction. *Autre temps, autres mœurs.*

I DROVE round recently to have a look at the ferneries in the Prophet's Garden. Here was one of those royal garden-houses, on the outskirts of the city, and was used as an outpost by Sir Colin Campbell in the Second Relief. It has been razed, the site gardened, and bisected with the broad Mall, shaded with mangos, a soft sand ride on either side. In the middle stand the Cantonment Club, theatre, cricket ground, and bandstand, among flower-beds and *pergolas* of *jaffri* work, which shelter palms and ferns. It is marvellous in this climate what a little shade and water can effect.

I found a Badminton Tournament in full swing under the mangos round the club in the Prophet's Garden. Belinda was winning, and methought hearts were flying about as well as shuttlecocks, and she seemed volleying them with equal grace and discernment. A nice boy in the Scilly Islanders came with me, in a most dejected mood, into the ferneries. Among the golden fern and maiden hair he gave me his candid opinion about the partner Belinda had chosen.

FOR a change from the usual evening ride or drive we went up the river yesterday—a pleasant trip, but not one to be indulged in too frequently, or it might spell fever.

The slow sullen Gumti floats rather than flows down through the "garden of India" on its way to join the Ganges near the sacred towers and ghauts of Benares. We took boat at the English Garden below Heart's Delight. Here, in the early nineteenth century, Nasiru-din Haider, second King of Oudh, laid out a garden and planted it with European trees, hence its name. Though by no means to be approved of as a man and monarch, he had a nice taste in gardening, and the situation is pleasant, steps leading down to the river and a high wall all round, to seclude his ladies from outside gaze. As we passed through, I noted the usual low-walled enclosures of British graves. The English Garden it is well named. It was near here in the final relief that Sir Colin laid his two bridges of boats across the Gumti. On the night of March 5 Outram and his force crossed to begin their outflanking movement, and, in spite of delays and difficulties, thanks to Sir Colin riding down and pitching

into everybody "most handsomely, I catching the principal share," says Sir Hope Grant, got across unperceived before dawn.

Through carefully cultivated fields, and flanked by melon beds in the rich alluvial soil below the high banks, which next rains will submerge, winds and winds the Gumti. My oarsmen, trained by the banks of Brocas, were not in as good condition as in days of old, and we did not hurry.

The river at Lakhnao is crossed by five bridges, which carry on as it were in chronological order the development of the city from an obscure hamlet to a capital. The railway bridge which we passed under first, in all its naked utilitarian ugliness, is of course the most modern production. The old builders pleased the eye better.

Round the first bend we came upon the park, imposing obelisk, dome and towers of the Martinière, facing us among trees, and giving an odd, partly rococo, partly eastern, and partly mediæval touch to the landscape. Poor old General Claude! what a poor substitute he must have found the Gumti for his native rushing Rhône!

Then on through quiet reaches of the river, given over to mud hamlets and cultivation, and

washerfolk busy beating garments to pieces at the water's edge, and to muggers and ghurrials. Of the former it may be said *monstrum horrendum informe.* A more repulsive spectacle can hardly be seen than the mugger as it lies on an oozy sandbank, for all the world looking like a log of wood, till it lifts its blunt head, and with its short legs, hardly more than flappers, lumbers its bloated brown carcase into the water at one's approach. Handsome is as handsome does. The mugger illustrates the reverse of the motto. He is only as civil as he looks. Woe betide the washerman's little child, or his donkey, wandering about the bank, or even a sick cow, that comes within reach of his blunt snout.

As in the world of men, so the ghurrial, though looking much more dangerous with its long sharp nose and appalling rows of teeth, is only a fish eater. Appearances are deceptive.

But let us pull on. They are a blot upon the scene, and the four-oar is so crank that merely to look at the muggers and ghurrials makes me shudder, and I am quite relieved to listen to the conversation going on in the bows about the good sport of shooting them. It seems that they have only one vulnerable spot in their thick hides, namely, where the head and body

join, but are exceedingly difficult to bag, as they nearly always sink into the water to die.

Here comes in that miserable Nasiru-din's abortive canal. He intended to join the Ganges and the Gumti by a course of some fifty miles. But peculative and speculative contractors intervened, and it was never finished. The only purpose it has ever served was that of a first line of works for the rebels.

Now we turned citywards, and under the pile-bridge, busy with traffic, the heavy bullock *hackris* lumbering over our heads. On our left lay a line of palaces and public buildings, each in woody gardens, many half in ruins, all the scenes of past splendours of Oudh sovereignty, all the scenes of battle and murder and sudden death, and of British heroism. Each of the three relieving forces fought over the hardly contested area.

Then under Bruce's Bridge, built in 1866, and here a fine view down the long, straight reach, spanned by the iron bridge ordered out from England by Ghaziu-din Haider in 1816, to Asufu-daula's picturesque, high-pitched stone bridge of 1780, with its thirteen gothic arches. In the distance rises the imposing outline of the Great Imámbára, perhaps the finest mass of masonry in India, and the minarets and domes

of the Mahommedan cathedral of Lakhnao. To the left, buried in trees, lie the ruins of the Residency, the famous flagstaff soaring above the greenery ; nearer, the towers and domes of Cæsar's garden palace.

At a little distance from Bruce's Bridge, on the opposite side of the river, lies the King's Garden, only a thousand yards from the Residency, and where the mutineers planted a battery. From this came the shell that killed Sir Henry Lawrence. In happier days the Hon. Emily Eden, processing about the country with her brother, the Governor-General, thus writes of the King's Garden :—

"Such a place ! The only residence I have coveted in India. Don't you remember in the Arabian Nights, Zobeide bets her garden of delights against the caliph's palace of pictures ? I am sure this was the garden of delights. Four small places in it fitted up in the eastern way with velvet and gold and marble, with arabesque ceilings and orange trees and roses, with quantities of wild paroquets of bright colours glancing about. In one palace an uncommon bathroom, white marble arches intersecting each other in all directions, marble inlaid with cornelian and bloodstone, and in every corner of the palace little fountains."

Can you wonder that, remembering this glowing description, nothing would do but that I should persuade my crew to land, deferring for awhile the prospective iced peg, and escort me to this earthly paradise ?

Up a dirty *ghaut*, or bathing-place, and through squalor, off the beaten track of the new post-Mutiny thoroughfares, to a large high-walled, fortified garden. Three lofty ornamented gateways with guard-rooms led into pleasant grounds, well planted with fruit and forest trees, and divided by gravel walks into parterres gay with shrubs. As I said, Nasiru-din Haider had a pretty taste in gardening, and the half-ruined aqueducts and tanks show a feeling after waterworks, combined with gardens, such as one finds in old villa grounds in Italy. Shade and cool, water and green, that is, after all, the main idea of a garden in lands where the sun has to be reckoned with. In the middle stands the King's Palace, round-towered, two-storied, and, wonderful to relate in this city of stucco, of stone, with its open arcaded hall, where doubtless the Governor-General was entertained ; in one corner a more costly villa, with high-walled courtyard, where I am quite sure he was not allowed to penetrate.

I turned away, regretting that I had not

known India in those more splendid days, and we pulled across the stream to the steps of the beautiful Parasol Palace; and so to tea and gossip in its vaulted and traceried halls, once the abode of Nasiru-din's beauties, and now given over to the club.

I WAS busy two evenings ago superintending the watering of my delicate seedlings, lest the *bhisti* should drown the life out of them, when I heard sudden shoutings down the road accompanied by a peculiar shrill sound—the trumpeting of an elephant. Now, all our own particular tame beasts that live in cantonments, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, so to speak, of the commissariat department, ought to have been put to bed long before this, and to have been enjoying their evening meal of sugar-cane, or, if they have been very, very good, the sort of tipsy cake that the heart of an elephant delights in, a great leathery flapjack, flavoured with rum or brandy, and spices and treacle. So I was surprised to hear the sound. Still more surprised to see a bamboo cart, which had been driven past the house a few minutes before, return at a gallop, as if fleeing from something.

The shouting drew nearer, accompanied now by a sound as of a clanking iron, and, down the road at a headlong trot, a broken chain rattling about his heels, came a huge elephant, his trunk waving in the air. Behind him ran his *mahout*, distraught, calling upon

him with every term of command and of endearment to stop; behind the *mahout* a small crowd of spectators.

"*Must!*" "*Must!*" ("Mad!" "Mad!") cried the *bhisti;* and he threw down his *musak* and bolted.

But the elephant urged on his wild career. He lifted up his trunk, seized an overspreading branch of golden cassia, tore it down in a minute, and trampled the delicate blossoms into the dust.

Whereupon I, too, beat a hasty retreat. From the vantage ground of the verandah I watched to see what would happen next.

Some of the commissariat people came galloping up on ponies, and tried to head him off. But the elephant cared not a jot for them. The ponies did though, and quite declined to face him. Things began to look serious. The elephant had reached my ungated entrance, and looked as if he had a mind to come in.

I felt in despair. Visions of my young trees torn up by the roots—I had seen a *must* elephant in the commissariat yard shake the large forest tree he was chained to—visions of my trampled flower-beds; nay, visions of the bungalow falling in ruins about my ears, should the elephant be tempted, Samson like,

to seize the verandah pillars——! But I had forgotten Vixen.

That lady had been dozing on the step of the verandah with one eye open—that eye which has the black patch on it, which always gives it such a preternaturally knowing expression. She was wondering when I should have done wandering about in the garden and go for a ride; it was nearly time, she knew.

Vixen now woke up in real earnest at the unwonted appearance of this huge intruder at the gate. Here was worse than any *box wallah* (hawker), whom she hates, and promptly chivies. Here was something larger and more obtrusive even than the pariah dog whom her British soul abhorreth.

"Go for him! S-s-s-s!" I cried; and then, the next moment, wildly regretted that I had spoken. What if that whirling, curling trunk —those massive hoofs——

I need have had no fear. Vixen darted out like a little white-and-black cannon-ball to within exactly the right distance of range of the foe, and then she barked her most abusive, contemptuous; and the elephant, who would have faced a wounded tiger, was seized with panic at the sight of a small terrier, and fled.

Half an hour later I heard that the *mahout*

had got at him, and had safely guided him, contrite and docile, back to bed. There are all sorts of moral lessons to be drawn from this little incident, and political ones as well. For the elephant read "India," and for Vixen, "Britannia." What a mystery is our hold upon this land!

THE last few mornings I have been having a great tidy-up in my garden. The *jaffri* work of the verandah, damaged by the rains and dust-storms, has been repaired. The clerodendrons, white and red, and both, are out, and, with the other creepers which are running up with magical rapidity, have been tied up and trained. Now is the time for cutting back the roses for successive bloom ; but the rose hedge and the standards round the drive I pruned last month. The chrysanthemums are coming on nicely, but then I have had them liberally plied with liquid manure. The vegetables take much watering and tending, and the seeds have to be pricked out.

As I write in the verandah comes a

> "Breathing of balsam and of citron groves,
> Myrtle then,
> And then a waft of cassia,
> And a wandering cedar scent."

The cassias are a sight down the road, feathery, clustered with golden yellow flowers.

The *tecomas* are very gay—orange rosy-pink and lilac, and my English annuals are coming on apace, especially the

> "Winking Mary buds begin
> To ope their golden eye,"

and remind me of Gay's old enigma—

> "This riddle, Cuddy, if thou canst explain,
> What flower is that which bears the Virgin's name?
> The richest metal added to the same."

But one may have too much of a good thing, and I find the gardener has scattered them broadcast into every vacant space!

The African marigold came to England in the sixteenth century from the Indies.

# DECEMBER

"Sadly fell our Christmas Eve.
We gambol'd, making vain pretence
Of gladness."

## DECEMBER

MY violets are in bloom! You cannot think how one treasures out here the quiet little "home" flower, buried in greenery. "The violet is like a nun," sings Tom Hood. Yesterday, oh, delight! I found a soft spot of purple peering up at me; the violets had sprung "from sleep like eyes."

Dear little English flower! "Love of truth, and truth of love!" I must press you and enclose you in *the* home letter next mail day, for three hundred years ago did not an English poet sing—

> "Violet is for faithfulnesse
> Which in me shall abide,
> Hoping likewise that from your heart
> You will not let me slide.
> And will continue in the same
> As you have now begunne,
> And then, for ever, to abide
> When you my heart have wonne."

My violets are in bloom! Carefully, one by one, have I gathered enough to make me a buttonhole for my habit for the paperchase to-day. It is a great triumph, for I have spent

more care and thought on the violets than on all the lurid tropical flowers that patch the garden with colour. They are grown, my violets, in pots in the back, the north, verandah —a long unsightly array, with ne'er a glint of the dreaded sunshine flecking them. Ere I am up in the morning, in the short twilight, when—

> "Day in a breathless passion kisses night,
> And neither speaks,"

the *malli* waters them vicariously by means of the *bhisti*, with his goatskin full of water, carefully trickling the stream through his fingers; for are they not the *memsahib's* most cherished plants, the "bilots"?

'Tis ever thus in life. We prize only what is most difficult to obtain. The grapes are dubbed sour, but not before the fox has made a futile spring to grab them.

The *malli* is, of course, the gardener. Every one knows the old story of the Irish girl just out from "home" desirous of some roses she saw, and of how her swain called to the *malli* to bring them, whereupon the daughter of Erin coyly remarked, "Shure, an' I didn't think ye'd known me long enough to call me Mollie!"

As will have been perceived, I keep both a *malli* and a garden. In India the two are not

inseparable. A custom pertains in villadom in England of two or three little gardens depending upon the ministrations of one jobbing gardener. In India some people—generally the thriftless, unprincipled junior of either service—keep only a *malli*. Nevertheless, strange as it may appear, to them also comes the diurnal *dâli*. This is a wicker tray, covered with vegetables of the season, and presided over by a stiff and garish bouquet devoid of greenery, which a muscular mahogany figure, dexterously draped about the loins and legs with a dirty *dhoti*, presents each morning with many signs of abject servitude. One's garden supplies others besides one's self, and one's neighbours appease the *malli* class by paying the wages of one.

THE air was so crisp and sharp when I got up that, what with my violet buttonhole and the paperchase in prospect, I felt something of the exhilaration of spirits pertaining to a hunting morning in England. The increasing power of the sun, and the hour fixed for the meet—one p.m.—however, somewhat disillusioned me. But I endeavoured to keep up the hallucination by donning a hard black hat. One never feels really well-turned-out in a white *solar-tope*, and though the Mall is white and glary, one really runs no risk in this place just for a few, very few, weeks in mid-winter.

The meet was at the local Colney Hatch. The inmates grinned and jabbered at us as we rode up from behind the stout wooden bars of the long line of huts where they are immured. Their relatives have to bring them food. It is like feeding the beasts at the Zoo, only revolting.

Outside cantonment and the city the land is very gay at this season. Oudh has been called the garden of India, it is so well cultivated. Even in this year of drought and dryness, here, where there is plenty of river irrigation, wheat, barley, and the *dhal*, where the wolf and

jackal lair by day, the *bajr*, and other kinds of millet, cover the ground; the mustard crop is bright yellow, and the flax is in flower—a bright blue.

The course had been laid about the ruins of the old cantonments. The houses were thatched, and were fired by the rebels on May 30, 1857. Now all is desolation. We jumped in and out of what had once been gardens trim and cared for as mine is now, the crumbling banks making capital "leps." Tottering gate pillars still stand, a tangled mass of trees and shrubs and creepers. Here and there yawns a well, long dry, which had once irrigated deserts into gardens. Very dangerous are these round unprotected holes; one shouted to warn those galloping behind one, as the pony discriminatingly swerved. I never see one of these wells without thinking of a sad episode in the Captain Sahib's subaltern days—how little Bobby, the youngest, the cheeriest of the regiment, not long joined, left mess one dark night, with a laugh on his lips and a cheroot in his mouth, to walk across to his bungalow, but two compounds off; how he was missing from his bed the next morning when his bearer went to call him for parade, and at noon was found drowned in one of these wells he had evidently walked into.

Now and again, as "the glad throng went laughing along," we galloped past remains of these pre-Mutiny bungalows, mere fragments of crumbling walls devastated by shell and fire and time. It was very sad. As, at dusk, we rode homewards through our well-gardened cantonments, I could not help thinking of the lives of the Sahib folk who had made and lived in these ruined gardens before the great "bobbery." (My *ayah*, when one day I asked her her age, replied that she did not know, but that she was born the year of the great "bobbery," *i.e.* naughtiness.) They rode, they hunted, they shot, much as we do now, doubtless. But they had no tennis, or even croquet, golf, or bicycles. I imagine them sitting in the evening on their *chabutras* in their gardens, the women doing Berlin-wool work or crochet, and talking most microscopic gossip; while the men smoked Indian cheroots, and drank bottled beer from England, or brandy and water. Indian breweries, soda water, and ice machines were unknown; new books and magazines came only once a month, and even the *Queen* did not exist. Then fell the thunderbolt out of the blue. Their gardens knew them no more. Where are they all, the men who made the India we inherit, the white women

(there were but few hill stations, and those difficult of access), the whiter children ? Some are dragging out days of liver-y old age at Cheltenham, or in the Asia Minor of South Kensington, their names well-nigh forgotten by this generation. Some lie in the crowded old cemetery across the river, some in scattered forgotten graves—some few, who knows where ? Simply no tidings of them when Sir Colin's victorious troops came to their own again !

HOW often one hears it utterly denied that any English women were abducted in the Mutiny, and never subsequently traced. Yet, every now and again, from below the surface of our quiet ordered life here under British rule, rise strange rumours, painful stories, which point to the possibility that women and girls of our own race have for years and years been imprisoned in native *zenanas*, a possibility which no one acquainted with native life can quite deny.

For instance, it is well known that, at the outbreak of the Mutiny, a Captain Ryan was serving with the Gwalior contingent as commissariat officer. His family consisted of himself, his wife, a little boy of five, a girl of eleven, and a pretty girl of seventeen. When the contingent mutinied they massacred the Europeans, and when order was restored, it is significant that, though the murders of Captain and Mrs. Ryan were substantiated, nothing was ever found out as to the fate of their daughters, nor of four or five other grown-up girls, intimate friends of Mrs. and Miss Ryan, who were known to have been in the station at that time. Nor was the Gwalior instance a

solitary one. A correspondence in the press some years subsequent to the Mutiny, elucidated the information that in more than one locality there was ample reason to believe that various Englishwomen were inmates of the harems; while in certain places where massacres of Europeans had occurred, and the men and women been murdered, no news could be gleaned as to the fate of children and grown-up girls.

I remember some years ago reading in the press a terrible story communicated by an Indian official, who, for obvious reasons, suppressed the names of persons and localities.

"About the autumn of 1869 I was residing in the Hindoo city of ——, being then engaged on Government employment. One day, while talking to some of my assistants on the outskirts of the town, a large *ekka* (native carriage) passed me. The curtains were closely drawn, but on each side were small holes arranged for the purpose of allowing the inmates to see out, without being themselves observed; and I afterwards ascertained that the occupants were women belonging to the harem of one of the Mahommedan nobles of ——. A few days afterwards one of my chief employés, a high-caste Hindoo *Munshi* of the literary class,

came to me privately, and made a singular statement. Having begun by saying he had *burra khubba* (great news) for me, he explained that a woman of the sweeper caste, employed by his wife to do what we should call char-woman's work, was also employed for the same purpose in the noble's palace. This woman told the *Munshi's* wife that one of the ladies in the harem was a European, and that she was in the *ekka* the day it passed me in the road. The sweeper-woman further mentioned that she had spoken with the above-mentioned zenana lady, who asked her carefully to find out if the sahib who was on the road on the day in question was a man of kind disposition, and, if so, to ascertain from him if a rumour which she heard was true, to the effect that all the Europeans at Khánpúr had been killed in the river (the Ganges) at the time of the Mutiny, and generally to learn what changes had taken place since that event.

"I had great confidence in the judgment and discretion of my *Munshi*, who was, among natives, a very superior man, and I told him to say it was true the people at Khánpúr had perished, that the Company's rule was over, and that the English queen was now ruler of the country. I then told my *Munshi* to have

the following questions put to the *zenana* lady. Had she been taken from Khánpúr? If so, what age was she then? What part of India she remembered, and what was her name? After a few days, my *Munshi* told me the sweeper-woman had once more seen the lady, who gave her the following information: At the time of the Mutiny she was a child, as far as she could judge, of about six or seven years of age. She remembered the incidents of the siege of Khánpúr, and said that one day, which, she recollected, was excessively hot, the European soldiers, with the women and children, were all marched out of the entrenchments. On passing through what she described as a *maidan* (open space), she became aware that a fight began with the Sepoys. At this time she was being carried in the arms of her father, who was in uniform, when suddenly a native snatched her away; she then found herself rolled up in a sheet, and she was carried a long distance, and at last she found herself with a native family, where there were children with whom she played about. After this, she thought that she had been changed from one locality to another on one or two occasions, until she was taken to the noble's residence where she was at that time, and became one of

the wives of the owner. In particular, the lady asked after two men who were at Khánpúr, and whose names she remembered; they were —— and ——. One of these two, she said, was her father; he was a military man, but as to which of the men was her parent my information was not clear, and it must be remembered that the statement came to me through three different people. The sweeper added that the young lady in the harem appeared about eighteen years of age, this opinion thus tallying with her own idea as to her age at the time of her being taken away, since which time she had quite forgotten English, and lived in every respect as the other inmates of the seraglio. The character of the information I received left no doubt in my mind but that a European was immured in the noble's *zenana*, and that she was one of the few who had escaped the Khánpúr tragedy. I therefore told my *Munshi* to ascertain if the lady wished to leave her present abode, and what I could do for her.

"After three or four days, the sweeper stated that she was no longer admitted to the harem, but that some of her own caste were employed in her place, and that from them she heard that, after her last interview with the European

inmate, the latter had become very much dejected, and cried continually during the night. In consequence of this, the suspicions of the other women, wives and relations of the noble, were aroused, and they became aware that communication with some quarter outside the harem had been going on, and hence the prohibition to the sweeper of again entering the residence; in addition, I understood that special precautions were put in force to prevent any further communication with the outer world. My efforts for the time being thus baffled, I had an interview with the nearest English magistrate on the subject, and imparted the full information to him, suggesting at the same time that efforts should be made to effect our countrywoman's release. The magistrate, Mr. ——, said this was easier said than done. It was against the policy of the Government to interfere with native prejudices, and few are so strong as those connected with the sentiment of harem life. Again, the information I had given him had come to him through four different people, and any attempt to execute a search warrant, unless conducted with the greatest caution, might result in the murder first, and then in the concealment of the body of the slain woman. Suppose, also,

a search was unsuccessful, a very bitter feeling would be aroused in the minds of the Indian noble and of the wealthy classes at what they would consider a most unjustifiable intrusion into their private life; and to the British functionary these difficulties appeared insuperable."

A weird side light on the dark tragedy of the Mutiny was thrown by a chance conversation I once overheard in a London omnibus. Two well-dressed, lady-like girls were talking, as girls will, engrossed in each other, when the 'bus is nearly empty. Said one, "My mother, you see, does not know who she is, nor what her name really is. She was quite a small baby in the Mutiny at —— when all the Europeans were massacred, and no one has ever been able to find out whose baby she was."

THE weather has changed to quite cold. Not really cold, of course, by the thermometer, only one's poor body, rendered so susceptible by the hot weather, feels the change so much. At sundown last night I was glad, when driving, to put on a sealskin, and the curtains blow about with the cold wind as I write. Indian houses are full of draughts. My drawing-room is twenty feet high by forty-five feet square, and the wind blows through the house. But the sun is powerful at noon, and I wear a pith hat for riding, and if I am paying calls at the ungodly hours of twelve to two, which custom inflicts on one in this convention-ridden society, I have the hood of the carriage up to shield my last new hat out from "home." Even then, in the shade, the wind feels piercing. But I do enjoy being able to prowl about the garden all day, though the glare is apt to make one's head ache.

I have been superintending the pricking out of hardy annuals into beds, especially attending to the pansies, and have had the geranium cuttings set in a hot bed to force.

The sky to-day, wonderful to relate, is covered with fine white clouds—that brazen

sky that was erstwhile so pitiless—and the sun, *mirabile dictu*, occasionally goes in for a few minutes. In fact, it is like fine October weather in England. It was only 68° in the drawing-room at one o'clock yesterday, and I actually had chairs brought out to the little fern pool under the orange trees by the deer's home, before lunch, and sat and sunned myself. We have blankets on our beds at night, and I am wearing a serge gown. The servants go about swathed in brown blankets, which give them a weirdly monkish aspect, and each and all wake us with a separate and continuous morning cough, which is as exasperating to us as it is to them, poor things!

After a few evenings of fires after dinner, we have taken to fires all day, and the house is shut up. It is very dark, and I miss my verandah. I think it must be blowing up for the Christmas rains.

The new potatoes have just been dug, and we had white artichokes to-day. I have been making a sort of preserve out of rozel. It is a bush of about a foot high, which grows in the kitchen garden, and bears a pink leaf about the size of a spinach leaf. When boiled, it becomes a species of red-currant jelly. The Captain

Sahib wishes some made into tarts for his men's Christmas dinners.

Ready for the Christmas decorations, the poinsettias have come out, such a rich glow of bright scarlet among the dark green leaves of the large bushes! The hour for church has been put on till 11 a.m. now, but I still get up early, and ride or play tennis on the *kacha* court on the sunny side of the house, by the exercising ground and the stables. It is made of beaten mud smeared over the top, which is baked by the sun. It plays very fast, but tires one's feet more than grass.

YESTERDAY the Captain Sahib was on a board to award prizes to the gunners' gardens at the Fish Market Fort. The men are given seeds, and encouraged to grow vegetables and flowers, as the life of a garrison gunner in an Indian fort is a very dull one.

We drove down the long wide Mall, shady with huge gnarled mango trees, and with peeps of the obelisk and turrets of the Martinière College to the east, and the minarets of the city, the saracenic battlements and gilt domes of Cæsar's Garden, the shining cupola of the "Parasol Palace," and "the towers of fair Lakhnao" shining at the end. The environs of this place are beautifully laid out. After the Mutiny, to avoid any recurrence of a siege, the enormous native city was much destroyed. Broad roads were run through it, and the suburbs well planted. The royal palaces and the ruins of the many "lordly pleasure-houses" which the luxurious sovereigns of Oudh had reared for themselves round their capital, were tastefully gardened.

We drove through the Civil Lines, past the houses of the officials, the Government buildings, post-office and church, up to the famous Bailey

Guard Gate of the Residency. We wandered about the ruins, which are well kept. With infinite pains all the cold weather, real grass-plots of weakly *dhub* grass, and ferneries are kept going. Stands of flowers conceal unsightly ruined masonry, and purple *Bougainvilla splendens*, the *Beaumontia grandiflora*, a large climber with white trumpet-shaped leaves, the scarlet star (coccinea) *Ipomea*, and the great *Thunbergas*, *grandiflora* and *aurantiaca*, blue, pale lilac, and orange, shed a glory on the portico of the house where he died "who tried to do his duty."

The Residency stands on a slight hill a quarter of a mile from the river, with a bare valley between it and the city, which is such a contrast to this beautiful peaceful oasis of greenery and flowers, being a white glaring mass of domes and towers, withal very imposing at a distance. The houses used to come close up to the Residency walls, which gave the besiegers such an advantage, but, as I said above, the city has now been levelled to half its size.

The Fish Market Fort (from the crest of the Oudh kings, a fish with its head erect) dates from about the middle of the eighteenth century. It is a very picturesque pile overlooking the river, and contains a mosque, and the Great

Hall of the Imámbára, the architectural gem of Lakhnao, with the tomb of a *wazir* in the centre. The Imámbára is, I believe, one of the largest halls in the world under one roof, but not so large as Westminster Hall. The effect, looking down from the tiny gallery which runs round under the roof, is very fine. It is full of the big naval guns dragged up from Allahabad by the *Shannon's* contingent of the relieving force, one of which I fired off under the superintendence of the officer in charge.

"The Roomi Gateway and the Imámbára," writes Miss Eden, in her "Up Country Letters" of pre-Mutiny Days, "two of the most magnificent native buildings I have ever seen. About a week of hard sketching would have been really pleasant among them, and we had only half an hour."

The quarters of the European garrison are inside the enclosure, but detached. As one stood adjudicating on the respective merits of cabbages and cauliflowers, what a sharp contrast was the scene outside—the elephants stalking down to the river to bathe, the camels swinging past into the city, and, overhead, against the clear blue sky, the massive pointed archway of the Turkish Gateway, with its ornamentations of acanthus leaves in stucco.

MICH.

IN THE RESIDENCY GARDEN

"And ever over the topmost roof
The Banner of England blew."

WE made an expedition to-day out into the country, as one would say if one was at home, the ostensible reason of which was the shooting of black buck by the Captain Sahib. On my part it was the overpowering desire which takes possession of me at intervals in India—to be alone. Alone, not only from one's fellow-sahibs, and mem-sahibs, the formal caller, and the faithful friend who pounces upon one at all hours, but also from the ubiquitous native. Occasionally the lurking domestic, behind the curtain or screen, squatting somnolently ready for the sahib's shout, gets on my nerves. I have the feeling I am perpetually being watched, as I dare say I am. The extraordinary lives we lead, our incomprehensible occupations and amusements, must unroll themselves like a ceaseless play before the eyes of our dependants.

But I have circumvented them to-day, for we took the Slave, driving ourselves, and, with the Slave, only the *chokra*. The Slave, otherwise the White Slave, is a lean, country-bred pony upon whom we, and all the other ponies, I am sure, look with contempt. For he has no talent for polo. Wherefore it ensues that

the Slave is relegated to the *tum-tum* (otherwise the bamboo cart), and is at everybody's beck and call, when anything with four legs is required to drive, or to bestride, at any hour of the day or night. Occasionally the worm turns. The Slave had a fit of kicks a few weeks ago, and sent the iron rail of the splash-board flying in bits into our faces, as we were returning from the bandstand. I incontinently scrambled out over the back of the cart.

The Slave belongs to the *chokra*, and the *chokra* to the Slave; they are one and indivisible. No Master of the Horse to royalty, no stud-groom to a Midland M.F.H., is more proud of his charge, or supremely conscious of his position. The *chokra* (*i.e.* boy) stands about three feet six, and presents an appearance chiefly of turban—livery turban, if you please—blue and white linen rolled in stripes, just like the other more mature grooms. Below the turban, which adds to the already abnormal size of his pate, he melts away into a wee cotton coat and involved rolls of rags, which all blend into one with his brown skin. I have reason to believe that he possesses a pair of heel-less, *sabot*-like shoes. But he never dons them, except in *mufti*. For he could not run in them.

I have decidedly a sneaking fondness for the *chokra*—baptismal or patronymic unknown. I have no doubt that he is a little fiend incarnate if I only knew it, given over, like the rest of his race, to the multitude of smaller sins. But I like him all the same, and when the Captain Sahib detects him in peccadillos, and the *chokra* makes a near acquaintance with a riding-whip, and sobs and howls most humanly, like a European child, my heart melts, and I plead for him.

The *chokra* is singularly bright—for a native. That is because he is so young. In a few years' time, when he shall have attained to man's estate, and to hubble-bubbles, *bhang*, many wives, and other delights, he will have become dense and slow. At present he serves us better than any one of our myrmidons. Moreover, he is not as yet hide-bound with custom, and he lets us do as we like, which others, especially the old bearer and the rustling, white-robed *khansamah* (house-steward), will not.

It was yet dark when the *chokra* brought round the *tum-tum*.

> "Ere the blabbing Eastern scout
> The nice morn, on the Indian steep,
> From her cabined loophole peep."

We had drank the cup of tea, without which

no European seems able to get out of bed in India, and had been attired by our respective attendants by candle-light. Out-of-doors the air struck chill. A bamboo cart is a very comprehensive vehicle, but singularly open and full of pitfalls for the unwary—a mere seat on springs, with a foot-board. The rest nothing; the whole wonderfully light running. Where or how the *chokra* maintains (especially when the Slave is in a kicking mood) what must be a singularly precarious position, I will not undertake to state. Suffice it that at every halt he suddenly pops out from the back of beyond, and stands to attention, holding on to the Slave's head-piece, both their noses on a level.

We started down the dusky Mall, I busy trying to keep warm, and nursing affectionately the barrel of the Captain Sahib's rifle (for, as I said, a bamboo cart is full of pitfalls), my feet on the lunch basket. It would never do to arrive at our shooting-ground without a weapon, as Our Paddy did the other day. It was picked up by a native on a journey. He did not dare to sell it, for fear he should be traced as having had it in his possession, as natives are not allowed to carry weapons. So he gave notice of his find at each police-station he came to,

and, eventually, the telegraph restored it to its disconsolate owner.

The False Dawn came. Beneath the Slave's feet the dust grew paler and more white, and when we left the European zone of trees and habitations, the wide, flat country stood out in an uncertain light, which was very becoming to it, lending it mystery, which, after all, is one of the charms of things, as well as of life and men.

The False Dawn came; but it was the False Dawn, and went no further. A strange hush, an expectation, brooded awhile over the land, the Indian equivalent for the long, beautiful twilights of more northern climes. It was a spectral land; men, as trees walking, peasants turning out into the fields, their rude implements and ploughshares on their backs, before them, scuffling along in the dust, their patient team of oxen, the yoke-pole jolting in the yoke, and stirring up a cloud behind them; the whole effect quite picturesque in the dimness. One could not distinguish the staring ribs of the gaunt cattle, nor note how, in all probability, their poor ill-treated tails lacked some joints from much twisting. The cruelty of an Indian native! He stops just short of taking life; but the lives of animals in India is a subject one cannot bear to think about.

It was refreshingly crisp and cool, and refreshingly solitary. We hardly met anything; occasionally a hooded bullock-cart, lumbering through the dust on its broad and creaking wheels, blocked the way. The Slave had to be pulled up, the *chokra* sent on to arouse the slumbering driver squatting on the pole, his head tied up with rags against the chill air, which reduced him to a state of temporary deafness, and more than ordinary stupidity. But the *chokra* quite enjoyed arousing him, and giving him his candid opinion in, to me, happily, ununderstandable terms, of his female ancestry. The *chokra* shines on occasions like this. His zeal for his master's service is quite beautiful to behold.

Occasionally we saw, rather than heard, some belated jackals fleeing by, grey shadows, on their way home to bed in the sugar-cane patch, after a roystering night, carousing noisily and hilariously in a ravine on some carrion find.

Then, suddenly, a distinct lightening of the world. Over in the east a blush. The real dawn has come. On and on we trotted, down miles of the straight, never-ending white road, the sentinel trees on either hand, till, suddenly, one was aware that shafts of sunlight were flickering through the branches, and flecking

the white of the dust. By this time it was I who was driving the Slave (if I may use such an expression, for that animal has only one pace, and does not allow himself to be driven), and the Captain Sahib had got out his binoculars, and was scanning the horizon for possible sight of the buck. We had reached just the country they affect—wide *maidan*, with low mimosa and scrub, sheltering sparse herbage; not a vestige of a village in sight, and only on the far horizon the dark patch of a mango grove—artificial, Forest-Department-planted.

At last the binocular tells true. In the far, far distance, buck, feasting peacefully and unsuspectingly. We can make out the slender graceful form of the lord of the harem, spiral horned, and of his browsing ladies. In less time than it takes to tell, the Captain Sahib is down and off. Treading delicately like Agag, making himself as small and unobtrusive as possible, and clasping his rifle to his side, so as to be mistaken, if it may be, for an innocuous villager, he gradually grows less and less across the waste, hidden wherever possible by friendly scrub, and, finally, disappears from my gaze. May luck go with him! Venison stew and venison soup are a welcome change in my home *ménu*, and then—such peace and good-will

to all men, when one has had a successful day after buck! But there's many a slip, etc. Talk of their "innocent noses." Really, for a professional poacher in early youth, as tradition avers Shakespeare to have been, he did not betray his usual insight into character when he thus wrote of the deer. The black buck are anything but innocent, especially those round Lakhnao. They have so many foes to contend against besides the sahib who, with the modern weapon of precision, fells them, unseen, at two hundred yards. Tommy Atkins is now allowed to carry a rifle, and he does not always draw the line at buck. A doe makes just as good a change in his *ménu* of ration beef. Then there are the roving bands of gypsies, unarmed, indeed, but, as are all their race, skilled in woodcraft, and adepts at poaching. They snare a herd by drawing a string round them in some mysterious and stealthy manner.

Meantime I have drawn up into the dust by the roadside, and have alighted. The *chokra* has removed the Slave from the shafts, and has vanished out of sight with him in the direction of a pool of water we marked down a mile away. I gaze round the horizon, and draw a long breath. I am at last alone!

Experience has taught that a combination of

the carriage-cushion, the lunch-basket, and the trunk of one of the trees with which the Government of India, with much forethought, adorns each side of their high-roads, make a lounge not to be despised. Of course I have a book, but, just now, I hardly feel inclined to read. It is so delightful, so refreshing, this utter loneliness, in the fresh morning air—such a mental tonic. There is hardly a living thing within sight. A flight of green pigeons come whirling down through the trees; had the Captain Sahib been here he would have taken toll. But they all flash on to the nearest crops, to take toll there on their own account. The ubiquitous sparrow tribe has a morning bath in the white dust at a safe distance from my presence, but they, too, soon flutter jabbering and squabbling away. Slowly, some unclean bird of prey, carrion crow or turkey buzzard—I could not make out which—comes winging over the waste. He is evidently suffering from repletion, for he stays his flight for a while on the tree-top, a repulsive object, bald-headed, obscene. But then *his* "innocent nose" probably told him of that mud-buffalo who had recently ended a melancholy career near the dry *jhil* hard by, and he, too, departs to try if he can manage any dessert. So I was left quite alone with

my book, and I "went home" for a while. Such is the power of imagination—it blesses him that gives and him that receives.

Suddenly, I was rudely awakened. From the road behind me came a great bellow. Down went my book, up I sprang! I was no longer alone, for, advancing directly towards me, was a large, cream-coloured Brahmini bull with a huge fat hump, a shaggy black mane, and a very fine *básso profundo* of his own.

I surmise he was as surprised as myself. Never, probably, in all his sacred life—he was a Brahmin bull, a *pán*, or dedicated bull, a votive-offering to Shiva—had he set eyes on a white woman. Little did I resemble the village maids and matrons who, at religious festivals, hung wreaths of marigolds and jasmine round his neck, and daubed his fat flanks with an open hand painted in scarlet. And what business had I there? Was not he, the earthly embodiment of Shiva's steed, free of the land, free to roam hither and thither, to pilfer the crops and the grain-seller's shops? Did I dare to stand in his path?

Yes, I did—for a few moments—admiring him exceedingly—he was such a fine fellow, such a contrast to his wretched relations, slaves of the ploughshare and the *hackri*, that

well-covered shoulder that had never felt a yoke, that waving tail with the black tuft at end which had never been twisted—such is the odour of sanctity! A sudden realization of the sharp cleavage in mediæval times between the Falstaffian friar and the serf of the soil, was borne in upon me, when—down went his head with a toss of his black horns, his hoofs pawed the dust one moment undecidedly, and then, with a bellow, he came for me.

I was, as I have said, utterly alone. Never have I less enjoyed the feeling of solitude. Never have I so longed for a crowd. I looked round, wildly, for a sight of the Captain Sahib and his rifle. But the black buck were still breakfasting, peacefully unaware of his stealthy approach.

The *chokra*—the Slave? I was equal to jumping on to the latter's back, and even the Slave, surely, would break into a canter if pursued by a mad bull? The *chokra*, that 'cute infant, he should be able to devise a means of escape? The *chokra* to the rescue! But no, not a glimpse of the pair. The Slave, having drunk his fill in the pool a mile off, was probably taking his feed leisurely off the *chokra's* turban spread on the ground, while that person, his bare little black pate pillowed

in the dust, was making up for a very matutinal start.

Not that there was time to think of these things. Facts, however, remained. I was alone, saving for the bull, and between him and me stood only the *tum-tum*—a poor, transparent shelter, and evidently a mystery to the bull, who seemed disposed instantly to investigate it.

The Forest Department of the Government of India have a practise, which at that moment I felt I could not sufficiently condemn, of lopping the branches off the road-side trees to the distance of about eight feet. In the hot weather this allows a nice current of air to circulate on the road; it also prevents the depredations of the goats, who, standing on their hind legs, gnaw at anything green they can reach. In the present instance, this custom circumvented me as much as the goats—circumvented, indeed, any one but a monkey. So two courses lay open to me—to take to the open, where I should probably be run down, or to dissemble, like a Drury Lane villain.

I dissembled. While his Most Sacred Majesty's horns investigated the *tum-tum*, turned over the lunch-basket, sent the cushion flying, and while his hoofs pawed my book into the

dust, I pursued a stealthy and circuitous course upon his flank from tree-trunk to tree-trunk, till I had successfully placed quite a good stretch of road between us. Then I sat down in the dust, and wished some one—any one—would come.

Mine enemy gradually took himself off. His bellows grew fainter and fainter in the distance, as he disappeared to some *dhál* crop he wot of, there to browse and take his noon-tide nap.

After awhile came the Captain Sahib, hot, hungry, and empty-handed. The black buck had sniffed him ere he got within range, and in a series of magnificent leaps had hurled themselves into covert and out of sight. I told him how he had missed larger game. Even at the risk of raising a native riot, it might have been necessary to shoot a sacred bull.

I HAVE been very busy having the Nipál pepper, picked a little while ago, and now dry, ground and bottled, to send away as Christmas presents. I grew it from seeds sent me from Nipál, and it is much more delicate and aromatic in flavour than the pepper made from the ordinary bright red chilies, and less hot. There are two kind of chilies, and they ripen at the end of the rains, growing in bushes about two feet high. The Nipál pepper chili is the smaller and yellower in colour. Green parrots positively gloat on chilis, and, what is worse, destroy and waste more than they eat.

THE Fever Fiend has had a slap at me, and, in common with very many other people in the station, I have been down with dengue. This odious, but not deadly, epidemic is a comparatively recent importation into India, some say from Aden. Hence the name "Aden-Ague," contracted into dengue. But for the name or the derivation one cares not a jot when one is in its grip. And a grip it is! My back has been bowed, immovably, my limbs beyond my control—and oh! the aches and pains! It is all the result of the sudden oncoming of the cold. I felt I was in for a bout as I sat shivering a few days ago over the fire in my sealskin at 3 p.m. But nitre and quinine have done their work, and to-day I am creeping about, feeling rather less than eighty years of age.

WE have had a very serious day. Our Paddy wanted a new polo-pony for a friend, and asked us down to the *serai* and help him buy one. The Captain Sahib could no more resist this invitation than could I one to help choose a new hat for a friend. So, hearing there was a fresh string of ponies come in for sale, down we drove to the outskirts of the native city. It was a most appropriate occupation for the day before Christmas Day, for a caravanserai always brings home to me so forcibly the story of the Nativity. The *serai*, as it is yclept for short, is merely a walled-in square, common to all Eastern lands, defended by a stout and high wooden gate. On the inside, built against the wall, are a row of little dim and dingy cells where the human occupants of the *serai* live and move and have their being, for the time of the sojourn, cooking their food, each over their special little cow-dung fire (in this woodless land), and piling high in the centre their goods and chattels or merchandise, covered by a thick felt rug, often roughly embroidered.

Inside the square reigned chaos and confusion—a medley of animals' legs and heels, and hoofs of several kinds, a crowd of unkempt,

dirty, wild-looking men. One threaded one's way carefully. There were beasts of burden —horses, mules, donkeys, camels, bullocks (humped- and straight-backed), and even an elephant—all mostly picketed by head- and heel-ropes to tent-pegs. The camels generally sat in a circle, noses inward, their bales piled in the middle, munching and crunching with great jaws active, and, all the while, twisting their long snake-like necks about to look at one out of the corners of their evil eyes. I am always duly thankful, when I have to approach its vicinity, to find a camel sitting; it has such an unpleasant habit of being sharp and nippy with its teeth, and a knack of letting out with its horny hind leg.

The bullocks were various—great cream-coloured humped beasts, trotting bullocks some, that go at a fair pace in a hooded *shigram*. Others, slow and sad, that only lumber about with a *hakri* (a waggon), or a ploughshare, at a funereal pace. Then, again, there were the small active little oxen that carry bales on their backs. The *shigram* and the *hakri* were packed in a corner, along with one of that queerest of vehicles, a camel-carriage. It always reminds me, when I meet it on the road, of the circus procession of my childhood, as it made its

triumphal entry into a country town. Tall, with bars all round the sides, and often two-storied, it contains, not the lions or the tigers, but a closely packed wedge of squatting natives and their bundles, who thus are conveyed over the sandy, unmetalled roads at something rather faster than a walk.

But our Mecca was the horse-lines. Thither we arrived in safety to find a knot of Afghan horse-dealers just come down country from their native mountains, with a string of Caboolis, Beloochis, and Waziris for sale. Wild, squealing customers, most of them, and their fierce-looking owners in "sheep-skins the skinny side out," with their matted hair and beards, and their treacherous Tartar eyes, are more than a match for the newly joined British sub on the look-out for a pig-sticker or charger. The game little Beloochis and Waziris, from a horsey land where racing is a national pastime, with their quaint, lyre-like ears, have travelled far with the caravans from the north, along with the dried grapes in boxes, and the Persian pussy cats. The Amir has taken toll of them—so much for the horses, less for the mares, and his pick of the stallions in the drove.

We noted a Rajah's rough-rider, wily, and

like the rest of his master's hangers-on, with a keen eye to commissions and perquisites. He was evidently attracted by some white stallions from Kathiawar. His taste apparently ran to a piebald, or leopard spots, and he seemed particularly partial to a pink Roman nose and uncanny, light-coloured eyes. *Chacun à son goût.* After an infinity of haggling, he will probably remove one to the tumble-down stables of the Rajah's palace, and subject him for weeks long to a cruel tying down of his head, and a tension of ropes to fore and hind feet till his legs stand out from his body unnaturally, and his neck becomes quite deformed by a preposterous arch. Then he will proceed to stuff him with *ghee*-balls and other messes, as if he were a Strasburg goose. When the education of the unfortunate steed is quite complete, he will be dyed scarlet or pink as to mane and tail. His body, a mere mountain of fat, will be further adorned by gaudy trappings and silver bangles, and surmounted by a huge peaked saddle; a cruel bit will be thrust into his mouth, his neck will be hung with red reins, and, thus caparisoned, and bestridden by a potentate almost as fat as himself, he will make a brave show in the eyes of the admiring native crowd

when the Rajah sallies forth a-riding in solemn procession.

We passed on one side a couple of "walers" from far Australia—"servants of the Queen" probably from some British regiment, who have seen better days and are now "cast," poor brutes—and devoted ourselves to the ponies. Times are bad, this famine year, and there were village herdmen with country-bred "tattoos" for sale. The family hack had evidently suffered along with his master. Lean to shadowiness, cat-hammed, curby-hocked, unkempt, and possessed of a fiendish temper, none the less Our Paddy and the Captain Sahib eyed him critically. For there is often a dash of distinctly blue Arab blood in these "tats," and many a noted performer between the goals has been bought out of the shafts of an *ekka*, rescued from dragging along half a dozen fat tradesmen in a canopied "tea-tray on wheels," from being mouthed with the cruel "thornbits," and hung about the while with bells, the cart adorned with loose metal plates which clash like cymbals, to cheer him on his way.

Next to these poor drudges a Cabooli horse-dealer had a little group of wild-looking little Himalayan ponies, sturdy little beasts, born and bred in severe climates, *gunths*, *yabus*,

*bhutias*, fit, as Kipling puts it, "to carry a church and climb its steeple." So engrossed did we all become over a closer investigation of these that we were unaware of the passing in our immediate proximity of a string of pack-mules tied head to tail. Now, a mule is an animal from which I always keep at a most respectful distance. The writhing head of a camel, with its huge chawing teeth, is a thing to avoid; a *must* elephant breaking from the swaying tree to which he is chained, and running amuck down the road, seizing and trampling on every object, animate or inanimate, that comes within reach of his trunk, is not to be encountered unadvisably or unawares; and I give a wide berth to a country-bred of uncertain temper darting suddenly forward with his teeth bared. But for demoniacal deftness of hoof and tooth give me a mule.

The noise in the caravanserai was so great that most of the words of wisdom that fell from the lips of Our Paddy and the Captain Sahib, as they measured "hands" and investigated teeth, were lost upon me. The mules screamed and snarled and fought, the desert-born stallion neighed wildly, and the unearthly gurgling of the camels mingled with the shrill trumpeting of some Rajah's elephant tethered

in a corner. Presently, however, I was aware that Our Paddy, a true Irishman, a perfect mine of wisdom where a horse is concerned, had lit upon something worth his attention. He decided to try him. A native led out of the turmoil a small, thin, angular country-bred, which kept glancing at us suspiciously out of the corner of his eye. We followed, at a respectful distance from his heels, through the great gate into a waste place without, where the beggars and the pariah dogs congregate. Here Our Paddy proposed to bestride his possible purchase. For a few minutes we watched him hopping alongside the pony cautiously on one foot, waiting for an auspicious second in which to throw his leg over him. The pony edged away coyly, and the noble owner, hanging on like grim death to its head, suffered himself to be almost dragged along in the sand by the refractory beast. After a while this performance heated and irritated and palled upon Our Paddy, who began to abuse the owner's tactics. But in vain. That wicked eye, peering so satanically white (we are told that Lucifer is an angel of light, a son of the morning, so I may be allowed my metaphor, I trust) out of the corner of its socket, that ever ready hoof, were too much for them.

Compelled to resort to stratagem, one coolie flings a cloth over the pony's face, another seizes and holds up a fore leg. In an instant Our Paddy is on, and off—careering wildly over the waste, trying the turning powers of the bucking, kicking, rearing little brute, and scattering the beggars and the crows and the pariah dogs to the four winds.

At the polo-ground to-morrow we shall probably hear that Our Paddy has bought that pony for his friend. He will then spend some loving care on his appearance, docking his tail, elaborately hogging his mane, and leaving only what he calls an after-dinner mounting-lock, upon his withers. Then he will send him by road to his friend, some days' journey off, the pony, with his groom, sleeping in the open, and possibly sharing his forage with his attendant, but, in the end, turning up, safe and sound, at his destination, and, in all probability, thanks to Our Paddy's sapience, proving a lucky investment for his master.

"What shall he have who killed the deer?
His leathern skin and horns to wear!"

THE Captain Sahib has taken the Globe Trotter out into the district, and has caused him to shoot a black buck, bringing it home in triumph in the bamboo cart, behind with the *chokra*. The Globe Trotter is in consequence much pleased with India in general, and with himself in particular. I am pleased, too, for I have ordered deer fry and bacon for breakfast, and deer soup for dinner, with venison the day after, and have invited the Globe Trotter to come and partake thereof. At this moment, however, he and the Captain Sahib are intent in the back verandah on an operation of so sanguinary a character, that, though they will result in the horns and leathern skin pertaining to the Globe Trotter, yet cause me to flee from that portion of my abode.

However, I will describe the Captain Sahib's methods, as they look prettier on paper than in the reality.

A skin is a skin, be it that of a tiger or of the domestic rat, and the same treatment applies as to curing it. But the preservation of a skin which is hung up, walked on, or sat on, is

very different to that of a bird which will be shut up from the dust in a glass case.

Lay the animal in the shade on its back, and with a sharp knife make a long, straight, but not too deep, cut, from the centre of the lower jaw to the end of the tail. Then cut the legs down on the underneath side till the cut down the centre of the body is reached. Separate the skin from the body. If the animal has been badly shot, wash the skin thoroughly in cold soap and water. Place it in water for twenty-four hours. Then take it out and scrape it well from any fat; skin the ears on the inside, and plunge it into a hot solution of one part salt and two parts alum, and just enough water to cover the skin. The solution should not be hotter than the hand can bear, and the skin should be left in it for twenty-four hours. Then stretch the skin on a board, hair downwards, nailing it with tacks round the edge. Be careful to get it the proper shape, and to see that one side is not more stretched than the other. Next apply a paste made of one part finely pounded alum and two parts chalk. When this is dry, beat it off with a stick, and apply more, as long as the skin seems to contain any grease. After this remove the skin from the board, when quite dry, and the

more it is rubbed with the hand the softer it will become.

Another process is to wash the skin well, and to peg it out on the ground or on a board, to rub it well with wood ashes, and to sprinkle it with carbolic and water in proportion of one of medicated crystal carbolic acid to forty of water. Then, with a knife, scrape the skin most thoroughly from every particle of flesh or fat, and rub in more wood-ash till there is no grease left. Then keep the skin perfectly dry. No skin or fur, whether tanned or not, should ever be put in the sun. A good shaking and hanging out in the air is the best thing for it.

It is obvious that when a skin is to be used as a rug, the application of arsenic or other poisons is out of the question, though this rule does not apply to an animal which will be put in a glass case. In this latter case an incision is made between the fore legs and down the belly, large enough to allow of the animal's body being extracted. The skin, when properly cleaned from fat and flesh, is plunged into the carbolic acid and water solution. After lying in this for a week, it can be taken out and freely anointed with arsenical soap before it is set up.

The treatment of the head of a horned animal

is somewhat different. It should be cut off, with a long neck, within six or eight hours of the death of the beast. Cut the skin down the back of the neck as far as the two horns. If the animal have no horns, this is unnecessary. If it have spiral horns, cut only up to one and round the other. Then remove the skin entirely from the skull, taking care that the eyes are not injured, as round them is a most delicate place, the skin being so thin, and lying so near the bone. The head can then be hung up in an out-house and scraped and cleaned at leisure. Saw off a bit of the skull and remove the brains. On no account lose the lower jaw-bones when they become detached.

Horns that will come off the bone, as an antelope's or sheep's or goat's, can be soaked for a day or two in a tub of water a week or two after the animal has been killed.

Now wash the skin well in soap and water, removing all the pieces of flesh. Split the lips and skin up the ears from the inside as far as you can, removing as much flesh from them as can be filled in afterwards with cotton wool, and not detected from outside when the head is set up. Then place the skin in a jar of carbolic acid and water, enough to cover it, and one part to forty, and there let it remain for six or

eight weeks, till opportunity occurs to set the head up. It can even be packed and sent away in this as if it were in pickle. Should the skin be much stained with extravasated blood, a few hours' soaking in water will draw it out.

Now for the setting-up process. Take the skull and fasten the upper and lower jaws together in their places with wire. Set the skull on a wooden neck of the same length as the natural one, and set this neck on a varnished wooden shield to hang against the wall. Be careful to set the head at a natural angle to the neck. A deer holds his nose very high, a pig very low. If preferred, this shield can be dispensed with, and the staple by which the head is to be hung fixed on the wooden neck through the skin.

In many cases a solid wooden neck would be too heavy ; but a small one filled out with tow, and fastened into the hole in the skull through which the brains were extracted, will answer the purpose equally well.

The cavities of the eyes should be filled with putty, and some wool put under the jaws, some putty to form the nose and to give it thickness. Then insert the eyes. In the case of a large animal the Captain Sahib has made these out of a French wine-bottle by breaking out the

kick of the bottom. Frequently we have had out cases of white glass eyes from home, and have painted them at the back the right colour. While on the subject of eyes, it may be mentioned that carnivorous animals have the light in the eye *down* the eye from top to bottom, while graminivorous animals have it across.

Take the skin out of the solution, and smear the inside well with a paste of arsenical soap. Put some wool into the ears, and draw the skin over the skull like a glove. Sew up the cut at the back with a shoemaker's awl. With a few tacks nail the skin on to the shield, and put a few stitches into the mouth to keep it properly closed.

A pinch and a touch here and there will set the head, as it dries into its natural form. When nearly dry, comb and brush the hair well.

A common mistake is to put wool or putty where there is no meat, which detracts from the wild look of the animal.

Only use white medicated carbolic acid crystal; it liquefies in a little warmth. It is a poison, and will burn hands and clothes if not properly handled. The antidote is oil. But when used in the proportion of one to forty of water, it will do no harm.

The nose and lips of a head can be touched

up with a little Brunswick black and the horns oiled.

I think our Globe Trotter will be very pleased with the final result of his somewhat unsavoury occupation. The black buck horns—they are very fine, some twenty-four inches—will look well on the dark oak paneling of his ancestral hall among the foxes' masks chased by dead-and-gone, hard-riding squires, and the skin spread in front of an ample hearth will form a comfy couch for the terriers—various. He will be reminded of us poor exiles for whom there was no going home when the meets began, but who did our utmost to show him our India at its best.

*CHRISTMAS DAY.*—Our demesne is in Christmas guise. The whitewashed pillars on the mud bank which enclose it, and which mark the entrance, are surmounted by an arch of string, to which marigolds are tied by their stalks, a few, very few, green leaves between—the approved style of native decoration. Marigolds are the favourite flowers in native gardens. How topsy-turvy the world is out here—Christmas decorations of what Shakespeare calls the "flowers of middle summer"!

A similar arch decks the entrance to the verandah, and the servants have further, for the sahib's "big day," stuck palm branches against the pillars. Seated in state, we received our *dâlis* in the verandah. One by one, each domestic approached with much salaaming, bearing trays of flowers, and cakes, and horrible sticky sweetmeats, receiving in return *baksheesh.*

The barn-like church was gorgeous with ferns and palms, while scarlet poinsettia leaves gave the holly-berry touch of colour; and the now bare punkah poles were wreathed with *arbor vitæ.* The band played with extra unction, bursting at the conclusion of the service into

the Hallelujah Chorus. Then it played the men home to barracks and their great spread of Christmas fare at two o'clock. Our own especial soldiery feasted on the turkeys and geese we had raised in the *jaffri*-work enclosed poultry-yard near the cook-house, supplemented with my rozel jam tarts. The Captain Sahib, returning from a ceremonial inspection of the banquet, reported that they had decorated their barrack-rooms with elaborate greenery, and that pink and white paper roses, so beloved of Tommy, enshrined our crest and suitable complimentary mottoes. Truly, indeed, did Voltaire write to the dyspeptic Margravine, "C'est l'estomac qui fait les heureux!"

A special feature of the Christmas Day service in India is the gathering of Eurasians. In the dim, remote parts of the ugly, shed-like building sit the whitey-brown rows of sad-faced men and women and children, in native-made European clothes, and the women, for the most part, in white veils. They do not seem to come to church in such numbers at any other time, but on Christmas Day would appear to cling to the faith of their fathers.

Our own *ménu* on Christmas Eve was soup of tomatoes grown in our own garden from English seed, also French beans and new peas,

DENIZENS OF MY GARDEN

*not* the tinned article which pervades Indian dinner-parties. My scarlet-runners are now doing grandly. They have gone on for two or three years from English seed, of course much irrigated.

THE roses in the public gardens—where, of course, they grow better kinds than we do—are just now glorious. They almost defy description, such perfect flowers, such masses! Roses, roses everywhere!

"What a pother have authors made with roses! What a racket they have kept!" exclaims old Culpepper, the author of the "Astrologo-Botanical Discourse on Herbs," 1641.

Perhaps could he have seen the roses in the Residency Gardens, and in the *Baghs* round about the city, he would have forgiven us. Old Rapin, too, would have been even more bewildered with the variety and profusion than when he wrote—

> "I cannot all the Species rehearse,
> Of roses in the narrow bounds of verse,
> Some curled, some waved, about the tops are found,
> And others with a thousand leaves are crowned,
> Through which the flaming colours do appear;
> Others are single, not t'insist on here,
> Either the Damask or the 'Mimidian' Rose,
> Or Cistus, that in Lusitania grows,
> Roses unarmed."

Two hundred years ago, in "Nature Displayed," was writ this pretty tribute to the Queen of Flowers—

"SEEK ROSES IN DECEMBER"

UNIV OF

"Would not one be apt to say that at least the most lovely of all the flower tribe are separated from the Commonalty of Flowers, in order to form an Embassy; and that they advance to render Homage to their Lord, and are deputed to hail him King of Nature?"

My rozel jam of red leaves has been so much appreciated by our cohort at their Christmas dinner that I have half a mind to try the following old-world recipe, from—

"A Queen's delight; the Art of Preserving, Conserving, and Candyfying, also a right Knowledge of making Perfumes and distilling the most Excellent Waters. Never before published. Printed at the Angel in Cornhill, 1656."

"To make conserves of Roses unboyled."

"Take a pound of red rose leaves, the whites cut off, stamp them very fine, take a pound of sugar and beat in with the Roses, and put it in a pot, and cover it with leather and sit in a cool place."

But the British soldier is a precious thing in India, and in this country one cannot play tricks with the digestion. A vigilant Government might misconstrue my well-meant intentions. Also, in a very few weeks' time the "cool place," "to sit it in," will be undiscoverable. So I make

over the recipe to the Grasse people in Provence, where they "candify" violets. Enthusiasts on the new diet craze, living, like my monkey, on nuts, are likewise welcome to it, and may find roses a pleasing variety.

*NEW YEAR'S EVE.*—We are all somewhat apt to grow retrospective at the close of the year, and nowhere more than in the Land of Regrets. Perhaps it is owing to the depression of spirits produced by the advent of the annual bills and the pessimistic horrors of the Christmas numbers, which are kindly sent out extra early from home to reach us in time. Perhaps, too, the attempt to assimilate old English fare in a tropical climate, has something to do with it.

Especially is this the case with those who have reached the "halfway house" of life, and whose hair, whose hopes, whose digestions, and whose illusions are not what they once were. We stand, as it were, on the summit of the hill of life. On one side we look down into the freshly green, sunny vale of youth; on the other, in the dark valley below, glowers the dark forest of old age, "dim with the mist of years." Behind us are rising already those gaunt spectres of the follies and mistakes of youth. Already within us we feel, both mentally and physically, the slackening of the silver cord, the little rift in the lute, which, presently, will destroy the whole harmony of the instrument. In our ears already rings the warning knell—*Tout passe*,

*tout casse, tout lasse,* as we turn over the closed chapters of the "might-have-beens," and the thought of our past years breeds in us anything but "perpetual benediction."

If life is a straight and narrow (or, perhaps, a broad !) way, these "might-have-beens" are its *cul-de-sacs,* its *impasses.* Over their entrance should have been written "No thoroughfare," likewise, "Abandon hope, all ye that enter here." But ambition, yearning, hope, taking the wrong turning, rushed headlong in, only to find themselves fatally blocked. And thus it came to pass, as Whittier sings—

> "God pity them both, God pity us all,
> Who vainly the dreams of youth recall,
> For of all the sad words on tongue and on pen,
> The saddest of all is, 'it might have been.'"

As a certain place is currently reputed to be paved with good intentions, so our photograph albums and our prisons are peopled with might-have-beens. With what a shudder we gaze at the old-fashioned dresses, the odd hirsute appendages of the admirations of our youth, and recall thankfully the lucky silence, the fortuitous interruption, which stopped the fatal words, and relegated him or her to the closed chapters of the might-have-beens.

Then the colonies are full of them. What

are the "tramps" of the States, the "sun-downers" of Australia, but might-have-beens? Now and again the papers remind us of the career of an old friend, a former schoolfellow. They are "gone under" in more senses than one, thrown away into the vast dust-heap of might-have-beens. Yet we thought so much of them, we expected such great things! At this season they are apt to remind us of the days that are no more by writing to ask us for money.

Chaucer started the fallacy that—

> "Of fortune's sharp adversitie,
> The worst kind of misfortune is this,
> A man that has been in prosperitie
> And it remembers when it passed is."

Dantē took it up and enshrined it in golden lines, and Tennyson stamped it as truth.

"That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things."

One and all are altogether wrong. But then none of these poets were might-have-beens, or they would have known better, or, rather, worse. For, for utter remorse and despair, the *fuimi* are not in it with the might-have-beens. Napoleon at St. Helena, at least, had something glorious to look back upon. Had the Suez Canal silted up, De Lesseps would not

have died of a broken heart. It was the might-have-been of Panama that killed him. It is better to have been and lost, than never to have been at all.

Oh, the vanity, the self-deception of the might-have-beens! No one, according to them, not the wife of their bosom, or their dearest friend, is ever fully able to appreciate the latent promise, the infinite possibilities, that lurked within them. No one but themselves ever fully appreciates, or feels so cruelly, that untoward accident, that ill-turned chance, that blighted their hopes and their ambitions, and drove them into that fatal *cul-de-sac!* Whatever others may think, they themselves know, they say, that it was not their own fault, directly, and that the bottle, the cards, the weak will, the vacillating mind, the dogged obstinacy, the overweening self-assurance, had nothing whatever to do with it.

> "He that would not when he might,
> He shall not when he wolda."

In some way or other are we not all "Baffled Knights," and, in our heart of hearts, do we not each know ourselves for a might-have-been?

But enough of these moralizings. I must go and dress for a ladies' dinner-party at the mess, where, at midnight, we shall all join hands round the table, and sing "Auld Lang Syne."

# JANUARY

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying."

# JANUARY

NEW YEAR'S DAY in the Land of Regrets! What will the New Year bring us? I always feel, in spite of the glorious sunshine, the fun and the friends, that one is living over a volcano. There are such changes in India, so rapid, so sudden. One's daily companion, one's own familiar friend, is moved on—to another station, or "home," or only just down the Mall to the cemetery, high-walled, for fear of the jackals.

But these are sad thoughts when one sits surrounded with such a rich, warm glow of colour as I do now in the verandah—starry scarlet poinsettias, set in their laurel-like rich green leaves, nasturtiums, begonias, purplish and orange (*venusta*), rich cockscombs, and lupins, "Figge beans," as old Parkinson calls them, adding, "Other foolish names have been given them, as Virginia Roses, and the like, by knavish gardeners, and others, to deceive men and make them believe they were finders out and great preservers of rarities, as you would therefore avoyde Knaves and deceivers,

beware of these manner of people, whereof the skirts of our toune are so pitifully pestered."

I am sure that Parkinson, in prophetic spirit, must have been alluding to Indian domestics. Greater knaves and deceivers I have never met, and almost every day they invent some new form of treachery. What dips my pen at this moment in gall is the passage across the forbidden land of the front drive of a flight of my washerman's children. And how do you think they are clad? Their little brown shaven skulls, their skinny arms and legs, protrude beyond a simple, archaic garment evolved out of my best new English dusters of blue-and-white check. So this has been the destiny of these choice products of my linen *almairah*, or wardrobe (a Portuguese word, by-the-by). Weekly, for some time past, when the clean linen was brought home upon the patient microscopic donkey's back, and subsequently spread out in the back verandah for me to check—weekly, I say, have I not been confronted with torn rags as dusters and the like, while the bearer, the table-waiter, the scullion, the cook, the *ayah*, the sweeper, and the grooms, all clamoured for new and whole ones to replace them! Truly there is much collusion among the "knaves and

deceivers" wherewith I and the skirts of my compound are so "pitifully pestered."

Queen Mab writes to me from the Punjaub that she saw the frost and ice hanging round the ripe oranges in her garden early one morning lately. What a shock William Morris would have had, for he makes the orange tree say—

> "Amid the greenness of my night,
> My odorous lamps hung round and bright."

Likewise Goethe, who brings in the mixture of gold and dark green as a whiff to Mignon of her southern home.

It is cold enough here. We have a fire all day, and a roaring one in the great chimney in the evening. But we have sold our orange crop to the gardener, to prevent him stealing them, and he, in his turn, has protected them—

> "With Mother and Boy that alarum can cry,
> And let them be armed with sling and with bowe
> To skare away piggen, the rooke and the crowe,"

as old Tusser recommended as long ago as 1573, in his "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie."

But this morning the guard caught bigger game. I was aroused by piteous wailing from

the orange grove by the well. Upon investigation I discovered a small, nearly nude boy tied up to a tree. It transpired that as he and his parents, journeying on a pilgrimage, passed down the road, the boy sprang over the garden bank, took an orange, and was captured. This had happened in the quite early morning, hours ago. The parents were already half a day's journey off. I released the culprit, and admonishing him with untold wealth in the shape of a rupee (which doubtless the *malli*, pursuing after, compelled him to disgorge), sent him to rejoin his relations.

Some of our orange trees are the Maltese, grown from seed brought from Malta. In India the fruit is ripe while yet green, but it is not of so good a quality as the Mediterranean kind. The Delhi orange is the best, a fine colour and juicy, and the skin peels off easily as from a tangerine.

The loquât is in flower, and give promise of plenty of that most delicious fruit.

*TWELFTH NIGHT.* — In England they are taking down the Christmas decorations, so I have caused the strings of marigolds fluttering by their stalks over our entrance to be removed. The marigolds are flaunting in the garden in their usual robustness. The *malli* is very proud of them. I think the marigold may be called the national flower of Hindoostan. Old English writers, too, admired it muchly. Lyte, the predecessor of Gerard, in his Herbal in Henry VIII.'s time, calls it "one of the plants of the sunne," "the golden flower of the ancients," and says, "It hath pleasant bright yellow floures, the which do close at the setting of the sunne and do spread and open again at the sunne rising."

This opening and shutting with the light of the "Marybudde" is prettily expressed by Carew—

> "Mark how the bashful morn in vain
> Courts the amorous Marigold
> With sighing blasts and weeping rain,
> Yet she refuses to unfold.
> But when the planet of the day
> Approacheth with his powerful ray,
> Then she spreads, then she receives
> His warmer beams into her leaves."

And again, Wither, the Roundhead poet—

"How daily every morning she displays
Her open breast when Phœbus spreads his rays.
How when he down declines she weeps and mourns
Bedewed as 'twere with tears till he returns."

And a still earlier writer, in 1572, differs from both—

"Such virtue here my marigolds
Within their stalkes enfold;
That Phœbus with his burning beams
Cannot their leaves unfold."

But marigolds have no virtue in my eyes, and their scent I cannot away with. What matter? The hot weather will soon be coming, and a thousand sweetnesses unknown out-of-doors in England will permeate the air.

At calling time to-day I was honoured by the simultaneous presence of the two *bhuri mems* (biggest ladies) of our community. This title is given them by the natives in allusion to their exalted social position, but their physical proportions also amply justify it. The profane Sporting Boy in the "Arden Foresters" has dubbed them the "Powerful" and the "Terrible." My heart misgave me when I saw the large landaus, drawn by the country-bred horses with the pheasants' feathers stuck at their ears, drive into my garden. For

their occupants are big in more than one sense, having battened and fattened on rupees and precedence, the uppermost seats in the synagogue, the chief places at the feasts. But I need not have been so alarmed, as, for a while, they entertained each other, almost oblivious of my presence, just as if they had not met the day before, and were not going to meet again that afternoon. Which is the curse of society in India, that you can never get away from the same set of people. But I digress.

I felt I was not of their world as they discoursed, far above my ken, of appointments and promotion, of official status and official pay. Only years of India could have imparted such knowledge of these abstruse subjects. Had I told them they would have misunderstood me, have resented it—I felt sorry for them the while. Pompous and overweening they were, yet plucky, duty-doing Englishwomen, who, in their time, had borne the burden and heat of the day—the fever and cholera-stricken cold weather, the burning, blasting hot one, by the sides of their hardly better halves.

It was some years now since they had been "home." The world changes so fast that they would almost feel strange when they did go.

Many were the farewells they had wept when their children left them. These children had returned, grown men and women, almost strangers to their parents, the sons to their regiments or their posts, the daughters, after a year or two with the (to them) so sadly not up-to-date mother, to marry some far-seeing young fellow with an eye to quick promotion at the hands of the powers that be.

Before my two visitors in the not far future lay Cheltenham or South Kensington, a good pension, perhaps a "handle to their names," as it is vulgarly yclept—an old age swamped in the busy whirl of English life. I could not help feeling that the landau, the going in first to dinner, the pension, might have been too dearly bought.

But I withdrew my sympathy abruptly, however, when they descended to matters sublunary, and began to talk away their neighbours' characters. For it transpired that a terrible thing had occurred at a very "big dinner" two nights before. The pretty little bride of the general's *aide-de-camp*, with a "handle to her name" (only she was born with it), but just out from England, had actually had the presumption, being palpably bored, to rise and take her departure after

dinner before the "senior lady" had given the signal for the breaking up of the party!

My two visitors were tearing the unfortunate to shreds when a neat little Ralli cart, also just out from England, drove up, containing the transgressor herself, arrayed in those very fashions they were wont to discuss over the ladies' papers at the club, and to try and induce their *dirzees* to imitate.

For a moment my head whirled. I saw an impulse to rise on the part of my stout guests. Happily they were leaning well back in my most capacious chairs, and it took them quite an appreciable moment to get out of them. I foresaw a social earthquake—cuts, rows—these social matters are sometimes taken up officially. As a drowning man clutches at a straw, I dragged in headlong the one subject of conversation I instinctively felt we should all have in common—servants.

The result was a consideration of the question from two points of view, which was not uninstructive.

To judge by the perpetual questions in the ladies' papers respecting outfits for India—asking if white drill habits are required in the hills; if a fur coat is useful in Madras, and boots two sizes too large a necessity because of

the rains in Calcutta ; and how many ball dresses are indispensable for a police-officer's bride on the frontier—one would imagine that the sole question of the life of an Englishwoman in India was the wherewithal she should be clothed. But there are so many other points on which she needs enlightening. For Don Quixote riding down Rotten Row would not be more out of place than the daughter of a quiet country squire or parson, plunged into the society of a gay station, or that of the mimic courts of Simla or of the Presidency towns. Equally a fish out of water would be the London girl finding her married life to be spent half the year under canvas, with, at most, one other European to speak to besides her husband, if he be of the governing service, or in some branch of engineering.

For all the good pay, money goes no further than in England. Luxuries are necessities, and all people have to live much in the same style. In the Civil Service the subscriptions to pension funds—which are compulsory—press as hard on the juniors as do the entertaining and the frequent moves on the military class. A pony-cart is a necessity, even almost to a sergeant-major's wife. It is impossible to do without a number of servants. Let no one be deluded with the

apparent affluence which the large-roomed bungalows, the carriage and horses, the tribe of domestics, would seem to indicate. Though wages are low, "many a little mak's a mickle." The servants are supposed to cater for themselves, but are only too ready, caste notwithstanding, to live on at least the crumbs that fall from the master's table.

Her Little Ladyship, worried, disillusioned, and perplexed, was only too thankful to pour forth her domestic anxieties into the capacious bosoms of the previous arrivals. She had begun by paying her *khansamah* (cook-housekeeper) so much a head for herself and her husband, allowing a margin for the odd guests who perpetually drop in to breakfast and lunch. Each morning he brought her a *ménu* for the three meals. When she had a dinner-party he presented a *ménu* on a different tariff. The young couple lived like fighting-cocks; an immense deal of trouble was saved; but the plan was so extravagant that they began to find themselves on the verge of bankruptcy!

With the zeal and intolerance of youth her Little Ladyship veered therefore into the opposite extreme. In a land where there are few English shops, and these do not send for orders, or supply fresh provisions, and the native bazaar

is unapproachable for ladies, catering is difficult. But she attempted it. Daily in the back verandah she chose the meat from the butcher's basket, saw it weighed, ticketed, and marked (lest it should be changed for an inferior joint), and locked it up herself in the meat-safe. By a personal application of her olfactory nerves she had mastered the nice distinction between real mutton and *soi-disant*, *i.e.* goats' flesh. Though a visit to the dark, dirty hovel of a kitchen almost took away her appetite, she ventured upon it daily, and checked the account for charcoal, also the quantities of bread, eggs, butter, and milk used each day. She even went so far as to measure the milk and test it with a lactometer, though she complained that her servants had invented a dodge to circumvent even that instrument. Her new dusters vanished, and dirty rags cleaned the plates and dishes. She kept everything under lock and key, doled out the groceries, and the eggs, and the wine, and the linen—only to find herself cheated at every turn.

The climate was telling on her, and, added to her worries, was making her feverish, weary, irritable. She missed her needles from her work-basket, her writing-paper from the blotter; the *ayah* wore her underlinen, and stole her

handkerchiefs; the bearer appropriated the money she gave him to pay the other servants with. The food palled upon her—the everlasting fowl, the inferior meat, and dubious fish. In every servant she suspected a thief, and could trust no one. The sahib, her husband, was growing so exasperated with their cheating and their laziness, their slowness and stupidity, that she daily feared he would emulate the example of the explosive subaltern in the Arden Foresters, who had recently been had up for beating his servant, an old *qui hai* custom, now almost extinct.

The older women tried to comfort her. They told that, though lying is inherent in the race, and that they lie as much to each other as they do to us, yet there is a code of honour among servants, and the headman of each department, if he be trusted, will, though he take his own perquisites, not allow his master to be robbed; that there is little drink among Indian servants; that they are careful and nimble-handed, and break little; that, as far as their ken goes—it is not far, of course—they are watchful, thoughtful, while being quiet, gentle, and unobtrusive; that in times of stress they have been found faithful—even unto death. The thoughts of both the speakers

went back to their early youths—they had been through the Mutiny—and there was a moment's silence. Both her Little Ladyship and I felt we had no right to break it.

Then one spoke again, with a tremble in her voice, about the native servants' love and care of our children; of their wonderful patience and even temper; of how the fragile little ones, fractious and impatient from heat and ill health, were never slapped or shaken by their *ayahs*. They told how, above everything, the Indian servant shines as an attendant to the sick—so soft-footed, gentle-handed, patient, watchful, skilful in preparing cooling drink and nourishing diet; how sorrowful and sympathizing they are when death enters the house, taking no thought of their own rest and food, but grieving with, and for, their masters.

By the time the visit was over all mutual asperities had ended too. The threatened storm had blown over, and there was peace in my drawing-room. Before they parted her Little Ladyship had offered to lend the stoutest *bhuri mem's* tailor one of her new-cut English skirts as a pattern! (My brain reels as I contemplate the abstruse mathematical calculations that that functionary will have to work out ere he enlarges it in due proportion.) In return she was to

receive some real old Indian dishes, such as the native cooks produce most temptingly. She has passed them on to me, and I will vouch for their toothsomeness.

### The Moli

Melt 2 ozs. of butter, and fry therein one onion sliced into rings, and a clove garlic minced, and a few strips of green chili, some slices of green ginger. Stir into it a table-spoonful of flour, and add by degrees infusion No. 2 (see below), and a breakfast cupful of thick chicken broth or fish *consommé*, made by simmering some fish bones, prawn shells, or scraps of fish in water, with an onion, a carrot, some parsley, a heaped-up table-spoonful of green ginger, and three green chilies cut into Julienne-like strips.

Work this to the consistency of a rich white sauce, adding a little broth if necessary; heat up some slices of cooked fish or chicken in it, finishing it off with infusion No. 1 (see below), and a tea-spoonful of lime-juice; a little tumeric oil may be used for yellow colouring. If the fish is raw, simmer it first.

*Infusion No.* 1.—A very large fresh cocoanut; break in half. With a scraper remove the

whole of the white flesh, casting it into a bowl. On it pour a breakfast cupful of boiling water, leave it for a quarter of an hour, and then strain the liquid off.

*Infusion No.* 2.—Return the raspings to their bowl, and pour over them a pint and a half of boiling water, and stir well. Let the liquid stand for half an hour. Then strain well, squeezing every drop out in muslin.

### Beas Toast

(*called after the Punjaub River of that name*).

B utter, 2 ozs. (1 chittack).
E ggs, 6 yolks.
A nchovy, 1 tea-spoonful sauce.
S ardines, 6-bone, skin ; and mince.

Milk, 4 ozs. (2 chittacks) ; a pinch of red pepper ; chili vinegar, 1 tea-spoonful ; lime-juice, 1 tea-spoonful ; Worcester sauce, 1 tea-spoonful.

Serve in a sauce-boat, very hot, with dry toast in separate rack.

### Curry

should be made of white meat, either of veal, chicken, codfish, or other white fish ; if uncooked, fry first.

Take salt, curry powder or paste, rice, two lemons, breakfast cupful of milk, a few peas, vegetable marrow, ½ lb. of butter, a few onions.

Boil the milk for half an hour. Add the curry powder, a tea-spoonful. Fry the onions in half the butter, and add to the saucepan. Add a little salt. Fill a wine-glass with lemon-juice, and pour into the saucepan. Boil a few peas and vegetable marrow, and add to saucepan.

Let all this simmer on the fire for half an hour, and then put away till wanted. Then heat up and serve, but not in the same dish as the rice.

### How to cook Rice

Put a handful of rice into a saucepan of water large enough to drown it in, having first washed it well in clean water. When the water boils, throw it away, and put in more water. When this boils, after about ten minutes, inspect the rice, which should be soft to the touch. Then turn it all out into the sieve, and throw cold water on it.

*APROPOS* of marigolds, Tryphosa took me yesterday to pay a call on an ancient beldame in the city, a great personage, nearly related to the ex-Royal family.

We drove down the Mall, and across, beyond the Civil Lines, to a space, half waste, half ruins, desolated after the Reign of Terror, to the gateway of the present city. The streets are too narrow to allow of a carriage passing, so we proceeded afoot down the narrow lanes of mud-and-plaster, thatched, windowless houses, each opening into an interior courtyard. We were blocked some time by the three-quarter-of-a-mile-long procession of a Rajah's daughter's wedding—

> "The marriage procession,
> And its cohort of tom-toming men,
> And the bridegroom's sublime self-possession,
> That dusky young bridegroom of ten."

The bride rode on an elephant, and was followed by a succession of gay cardboard and tinsel doll's houses, some six feet high, carried on coolie's heads. Then came trays of artificial flowers, then trays of dolls, then trays of cardboard animals. Finally, servants and retainers, the latter in cast-off British uniforms, resembling

Guy Fawkes. Another elephant closed the procession, which was interpersed with discordant native bands and many tom-toms, and with led horses reined up within an inch of their lives, and gaily caparisoned with mediæval-looking trappings, and with their long manes and tails dyed pink.

We stopped before an arched gateway bearing the Oudh royal crest painted on the stucco. In the outer, or men's, courtyard lounged a number of tatterdemalion servants in scarlet livery. A coarse curtain of sacking, hung across the opposite archway, prevented the bold male gaze from penetrating into the further court allotted to the women—

> "All their womanhood has been
> Hencooped behind a marble screen—
> They can but count their pearls and doze."

In the middle of this lay an oblong white marble tank filled with water, and containing gold fish, a carved marble lion sentinel at each corner. I thought of Lyall—

> "While the landscape flames
> With heat, within the marble court
> I lie, and laugh to see my dames
> About the shimmering fountain sport."

What vision of beauty was perhaps to burst upon me!

Round the court rose lofty buildings, with Moorish arches—

"The cool arcade for my ladies fair."

At the end arched doorways opened into a spacious apartment, which was an odd mixture of luxury and dirt. Gilded French mirrors hung on the walls. Venetian glass chandeliers depended from the gaily painted vaulted roof. But the floor was innocent of the broom, and littered with the dirty wooden bedsteads of the attendants. The lady herself slept in a smaller room within, but one of a group of woolly-headed negro servants informed us that she would receive us in "the garden."

Passing through a door in the wall, we found ourselves in a little enclosed *parterre*, laid out in geometrical flower-beds. There were a few fruit trees and shrubs; but the *culte* of the marigold reigned supreme.

On the pavement, with her bare feet in the dry gutter which ran round, sat the divinity of this shrine, on a spread-out sheet, busy directing and scolding a number of coolie women who were tidying up the garden. Her face expressed force of character, but her dignity was considerably marred by her costume. She was very stout and unwieldy, yet she wore

only a white muslin short bodice and a petticoat, and a sheet thrown over her shoulders. As she had suffered from a slight paralytic stroke, her head was tied up with a red turban and her chin with a pink rag!

Our hostess did not rise to receive us, but chairs were brought, and conversation began between Tryphosa and herself at the top of their voices, and the old *begum's* was that of a peacock.

While we were talking, a water-carrier passed in, and filled up the water-jugs which stood about. I noticed that he had covered his head with a cloth, lest his eyes should fall on the women.

We were taken across the garden to look in at the private family mosque on the opposite side. It was a tiny minaretted building with three arched doorways, and stood on a terrace in another little courtyard with another marble tank below. Of course, we, being women, were not allowed to enter, but I could see that the interior was decorated with pictures and inscriptions.

On the terrace, a *maulvi* was engaged teaching a youthful scion of the house his prayers. The boy, in his best cap and clothes, was prostrating himself on his prayer-carpet, and the

*maulvi*, with upturned face, and hands over his ears, kept up a continuous cry of "Allah!"

Before we left, we tried to persuade the old lady to have her photograph taken for my benefit. But after much haggling about the price, she gave it up on finding that she would have to be seen by the local photographer.

"How beautiful is the rain
After the dust and the heat!"

A RAINY, cloudy day with cold wind. The Christmas rains, long overdue, have, we trust, come at last. The question is, Have they saved the crops and staved off the famine?

Twenty-four hours' rain! We have not seen the sun all day. There are large puddles in the road, and everything looks refreshingly green.

"The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,
And drinks and gapes for drink again."

The rain was so violent last night that it made a hole in the thatch of the verandah, and dealt devastation, and spread consternation among the pots and the plants. The monkey, who resides in the box at the beginning of the garden path, tethered to the big acacia, was almost drowned out. But I hear the recitation of Bunda's woes with equanimity. He has a trick of jumping out upon me as I pass his box, to the detriment of my dress.

The War Lord, as the natives call him, has swooped down upon us on inspection bent. He has spread the white wings of his camp on

the short-lived *duph* grass lawns of the Prophet's Garden, under the gnarled mangoes. A street of staff tents leads up to the portable flag-staff which has been set up before the dining *shemianah* (tent). On one side of this is a row of sleeping tents ; on the other a row of office tents, each tent opening into an outer passage formed by the double fly or roof. The clerks inhabit a separate street of tents. The whole has been transformed into a thing of beauty, if not a joy for ever, by the labours of the *mallis*, who have gardened round the tents and the carefully watered drives, with pots of geraniums and roses from the Botanical Garden.

> "The flower-bed laid with taste,
> Where the old grove sheltered a sandy waste,
> How soft the geraniums gleam in
> The light of a dusky crimson sky!"

A week hence and the whole will be wiped out as if it had never been. A delightful cold-weather life this of the Great Panjandrums, civil and military, flitting from place to place, and living in their great roomy marquees, gay and cosy within with the orange and red striped linings.

WE have been dancing all night at the Parasol Palace. It was the seraglio of Nasiru-din Haider, and its central hall, surrounded by Moorish arcades, forms one of the most beautiful ballrooms in the world, I fancy. Crystal chandeliers, so beloved of the oriental potentate, cast a soft glow; there is the terrace to sit out on overlooking the river.

There is no lack of "go" about a ball in India. We English are not, as a nation, devoted to dancing. South of the Tweed, it has never been a national pastime, a social recreation. The Austrians, and the Hungarians especially, of every class, love it for its own sake; it embraces there every age among its ardent votaries. There is hardly a nation but excels us on the "light fantastic toe." It was not so, surely, in the old *deux-temps* days of Dundreary whiskers and crinolines. The dancing man of that day meant business. He thought he looked "killing," as he called it, with his hair rather long and parted down the middle, as he twisted tenderly his luxuriant whisker with his fingers. He came early and he stayed late. He preferred dancing to sitting out, and could stand upright on his own axis

without lolling against a door-post. Then he danced! Ye gods! how he did dance, waltzing at a rotatory speed we cannot now achieve! The joys of "kitchen" lancers were unknown to him, but he did not disdain square dances; he knew his steps and his figures too. "Oh! good young man! Most excellent young man!" "Though lost to sight, to memory dear," enshrined for ever in the pages of old *Punches*, flashing upon us in the Pickwickian chronicles of Mr. Wardell's festivities.

But his descendant is still very much to the fore in India. There the hostess has no trouble in beating up with herculean efforts a requisite number of dancing men. Indeed, they far exceed the opposite sex.

Belinda had arrived, as usual, with her card more than half made up. Such is the fashion of the land, when a partner is much in demand. *Chits* (notes) had been flying about all the morning to her. Would-be partners, in *gharrys* or on ponies, I had seen going up to the bungalow. Otherwise they would have had no chance. Belinda enjoyed herself hugely, so she told me next morning. But she would not show me her card lest I should cavil at the frequency of certain names. Those not lucky

enough to be there inscribed came and confided to me privately that it was a "rotten" dance.

Something, indeed, was rotten in the state of Denmark. For the ball was opened with a catastrophe.

Our "Powerful" and "Terrible" were there, of course, giving tone and dignity to the entertainment. The "big ladies" were received with due solemnity and pomp and circumstance by the hosts—it was a bachelor's ball—and marshalled across the hall to where, between two pillars under an arch, in the most prominent position, had been placed a large sofa, on which they proceeded to seat themselves in all their majesty.

It had been a very handsome sofa, out from England, wood, well upholstered—not one of your country-made wicker concerns. But, alas! the white ants had done their work on it, and wreaked their wicked wills, only too well. In the midst of the second waltz there was a crash that rose above the band. Every one stopped dancing and turned towards that archway. The sofa's hind legs had given way, beneath its unwonted burden, eaten through by the tiny depredators. It collapsed, and with it its occupants. The rest was chaos!

I heard afterwards that her Little Ladyship had spent the whole of "The Beautiful Blue Danube" in the ladies' dressing-room assisting to repair the ravages caused in the toilettes of our two bruised and battered *bhuri mems.*

WE rode round to-day by the saddest, the most sacred, in English eyes, of all the many *baghs*, or gardens, round about Lakhnao—that in which Havelock lies. Some three miles away among the fields on the Khánpúr road, it was one of the many "lordly pleasure-houses" built by the last King of Oudh for one of his many favourites—just a double-storied house of masonry in a large square garden surrounded by a nine-foot wall. But the fruit trees with which he planted it have been felled, the walls are loopholed and battered, earthen *rampes* and bastions have been added. For the A'lambagh played an important part in all the three Reliefs, commanding, as it did, the road to Khánpúr.

Hither Havelock advanced on September 22, 1857, and, driving out the rebels next day, left there his baggage and stores, and passed on to relieve the Residency. He got in, but was not strong enough to get out, or to remove the garrison; and Colonel Mackintyre had to defend himself at the A'lambagh for forty-five days. It was *viâ* the A'lambagh that the signals instructing Sir Colin Campbell as to his advance were transmitted. "All the necessary particulars," writes Martin Gubbins, "having

been found under the head of 'Telegraph' in the 'Penny Cyclopædia' in my library, the general (Outram) ordered the immediate erection of a semaphore on the top of the Residency, and copies of the necessary instructions were sent to the A'lambagh."

Sir Colin reached the A'lambagh on November 12, and thus ended the first plucky defence. Mackintyre never had as many as one thousand European troops, and only eight guns, but he only lost one European killed and two wounded.

Sir Colin made the A'lambagh his base. Hither he returned on the 24th with that sad procession of the war-worn garrison, the sick and wounded, and the women and children he had rescued from the Residency. Hither, on the 26th, was brought Havelock's body for burial; and then Sir Colin moved on with his army and his weary *cortége* to Khánpúr to relieve Windham, leaving Outram to hold the A'lambagh.

Here for over three long months the Bayard of India stood at bay with under four thousand men, only twenty-five guns (but they were commanded by the fiery Olpherts), against as many as sometimes thirty thousand truculent mutineers left in undisputed possession of the deserted city. Many were the attempts made to dislodge him.

When strategy failed fanaticism stepped in. The rebel Maulvi himself on one occasion led the attack, but only to be repulsed. On a Sunday, February 21, the garrison was taken unawares while at church parade. Ere the troops could be turned out to withstand him, the enemy had penetrated to within five hundred yards of the British position. He was beaten back, however, baffled, but only to make a final desperate attempt three days later. The Royal Begum herself, surrounded by her vizir and her court, all mounted on elephants, came to encourage the assault. But Outram had now received large reinforcements, and the enemy was gradually repulsed, the procession of elephants fleeing before Olpherts' guns.

Eight days later Sir Colin and his victorious army reached the A'lambagh, and three weeks later Lakhnao was in his hands. Not, however, before there had been yet a third defence of the devoted stronghold. As the army gradually worked its way into the city and drove the rebels across the Gumti, the garrison of the A'lambagh had been reduced to less than one thousand men under Brigadier Franklyn. On the morning of March 16 masses of the enemy—cavalry, artillery, infantry—poured down upon the A'lambagh, trying to cut Sir

Colin's line of communications. For three hours the fight lasted, the enemy swarming in over the British rifle-pits, but, chiefly by means of the ubiquitous Olpherts and his guns, they were checked and then routed.

The A'lambagh is very quiet and peaceful nowadays, lying away from the life and stir of cantonments and from the hum of the native city. Beneath the tall white obelisk Havelock sleeps well in the "Garden of God."

I HAVE been superintending the making of Cape gooseberry, or Tipari, jam, and very excellent is the result. The Cape gooseberry is not a gooseberry to look at or to taste. It is a pinky-yellow fruit, not unlike a white-heart cherry, and grows on low bushes close to the ground, down each side of the straight kitchen-garden path.

In the garden I have been very busy sowing fresh seeds in the hot bed. There has been a great deal to do pricking out annuals into the little beds that edge the verandah wall; and I have had all the roses and fruit trees opened out and mulched.

Be it well understood that when I speak of doing a thing in the garden myself, it merely means I sit, or stand, and see it done. In this land no one does any gardening personally, but the supervision of the ignorant, untrustworthy, uninterested *malli* is far more trouble.

There was a big inspection by the War Lord yesterday morning, but the cold wind drove me home from the parade-ground at 9 a.m. In the evening the "distinguished visitors" were entertained at an evening garden-party in the ruins of the Palace of Heart's Delight. Does not this sound charming and romantic, out in

the shiny East? As a matter of fact, it was abominably chilly between 9 and 10 p.m. There was the inevitable British infantry band playing in the inevitable *chabbutra* among the stiff flower-beds. A huge bonfire had been lighted on an empty space, round which all that is "society" in the station was grouped in the inevitable cane armchairs, their feet upon the inevitable striped Agra carpet.

Born of much social anxiety and suffering, the conviction grows upon me that a great deal of the conventionality, the stiffness, the wrangling, the feuds and internecine warfare, the worship of official rank and precedence, and of the Medes and Persians law which rule society out here,—all these ills that afflict us, are, in some measure, due to the way we allow the bearers to arrange the chairs in solemn rows, or in an exact semicircle. How I long at these functions to shuffle up both chairs and their occupants, the *memsahibs*, big and little, covenanted and uncovenanted, the heaven and the earthly born!

A great full moon and a bonfire lit up a weirdly beautiful scene.

"The garden palace stands,
A desert ruin, choked with sands,
A broken well 'mid trees that fade."

Heart's Delight is the most picturesquely situated of all the "lordly pleasure-houses" that successive Oudh sovereigns reared round their capital. S'aadhat' Ali Khan built it for what we should call a hunting-box. Round it he laid out a kind of park, sloping gently down to the banks of the Gumti, and stocked it with deer and other game, which he hunted after the native way with hawks and trained leopards. When the rebellion came, Heart's Delight was strongly held by the mutineers. But Sir Colin's force advanced against it on November 14, 1857, and it was captured after a running fight of two hours by the Highlanders and the Fighting Fifth, and the relieving force swept on irresistibly down towards the river and the city.

A fortnight later, however, and the tide of war had ebbed back again to Heart's Delight. Hither returned the relieving force, victorious, convoying the women and children it had rescued from the besieged Residency. But the price of victory had been dear. For it brought with it also the hero of the First Relief, Sir Henry Havelock—dying. Again over the ruined central tower of Heart's Delight, which I saw silhouetted that evening against the moon, "the banner of England blew." But it

fluttered at half-mast. For, on November 24 "the Covenanter" entered into "the rest that remaineth." He sleeps a few miles further down the Khánpúr road in the garden of another palace, God's Garden—God's Acre.

The ruins of Heart's Delight have been tenderly gardened. Gay creepers clothe the tower and the loopholed walls, but—

> "O'er the sloping mound where the roses bloom
> Can it be an old forgotten tomb?"

For all the British graves which lie below are nameless, save those of Lieutenant W. Paul, 4th Punjaub Rifles, and Lieutenant Charles Keith Dashwood, of the 18th B.N.I.

AROUND Heart's Delight hangs a well-authenticated ghost story, interesting at the present day as a solitary instance in which a supernatural apparition succeeded in "scoring off" the War Office. It is related in "Footfalls," by Robert Dale Owen, who declares "that although, in accordance with the wishes of the family, some of the names are merely represented by initials, they are all known to him. As, however, the name of the officer subsequently appeared in print, we shall not be committing any breach of courtesy or good feeling in stating that Captain German Wheatcroft is the name in full." The following is the tale as told by Owen :—

"In the month of September, 1857, Captain German Wheatcroft, of the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, went out to India to join his regiment.

"His wife remained in England, residing at Cambridge. On the night between the 14th and 15th of November, 1857, towards morning, she dreamed that she saw her husband, looking anxious and ill; upon which she immediately awoke, much agitated. It was bright moonlight, and, looking up, she perceived the same figure standing by the bedside.

He appeared in his uniform, his hand pressed across his breast, the hair dishevelled, the face very pale. His large dark eyes were fixed full upon her; their expression was that of great excitement, and there was a peculiar contraction of the mouth, habitual to him when agitated. She saw him even to each minute particular of his dress, as distinctly as she had ever done in her life, and she remembers to have noticed between his hands the white of his shirt bosom, unstained, however, with blood. The figure seemed to bend forward as if in pain, and to make an effort to speak; but there was no sound. It remained visible, the wife thinks, as long as a minute, and then disappeared.

"Her first idea was to ascertain if she was actually awake. She rubbed her eyes with the sheet, and felt that the touch was real. Her little nephew was in bed with her; she bent over the sleeping child and listened to its breathing. The sound was distinct, and she became convinced that what she had seen was no dream. It need hardly be added that she did not again go to sleep that night.

"Next morning she related all this to her mother, expressing the conviction that though she had noticed no marks of blood on his dress,

Captain Wheatcroft was either killed or grievously wounded. So fully impressed was she with the reality of the apparition, that she henceforth refused all invitations. A young friend soon afterwards urged her to go with her to a fashionable concert, reminding her that she had received from Malta, sent by her husband, a handsome dress-cloak which she had never yet worn. But she positively declined, declaring that, uncertain as she was whether she was not already a widow, she would never enter a place of amusement until she had letters from her husband (if, indeed, he still lived), of a later date than November 14th.

"It was on a Tuesday, in the month of December, that a telegram regarding the actual fate of Captain Wheatcroft was published in London. It was to the effect that he had been killed before Lucknow on the *fifteenth* of November.

"This news, given in the morning paper, attracted the attention of Mr. Wilkinson, a London solicitor, who had charge of Captain Wheatcroft's affairs. When, at a later period, this gentleman met the widow, she informed him that she had been quite prepared for the melancholy news, but that she felt sure that her husband had not been killed on the 15th of

November, inasmuch as it was during the night between the 14th and the 15th that he appeared to her.[1]

"The certificate from the War Office, however, which it was Mr. Wilkinson's duty to obtain, confirmed the date given in the telegram, its tenor being as follows :—

"No. $\frac{9579}{1}$. "'War Office, 30th January, 1858.

"'This is to certify that it appears by the records in this office, that Captain German Wheatcroft, of the 6th Dragoon Guards, was killed in action on the 15th of November, 1857.

"'(Signed) B. HAWES.'[2]

"Mr. Wilkinson called at the office of Messrs. Cox and Greenwood, the army agents, to ascertain if there were no mistake in the certificate.

[1] "The difference of longitude between London and Luck now being about five hours, 3 or 4 o'clock a.m. in London would be 8 or 9 o'clock a.m. at Lucknow. But it was in the *afternoon*, not in the morning, as will be seen in the sequel, that Captain Wheatcroft was killed. Had he fallen on the 15th, therefore, the apparition to his wife would have appeared several hours before the engagement in which he fell, and while he was yet alive and well.—R. D. OWEN."

[2] "Into this certificate, of which I possess the original, an error has crept. Captain German Wheatcroft was of the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons, not of the 6th Dragoon Guards.—R. D. OWEN."

But nothing there appeared to confirm any surmise of inaccuracy. Captain Wheatcroft's death was mentioned in two separate despatches of Sir Colin Campbell, and in both the date corresponded with that given in the telegram.

"So matters rested, until, in the month of March, 1858, the family of Captain Wheatcroft received from Captain G—— C——, then of the Military Train, a letter dated from near Lucknow on the 15th December, 1857. This letter informed them that Captain Wheatcroft had been killed before Lucknow, while gallantly leading on the squadron, not on the 15th November, as reported in Sir Colin Campbell's despatches, but on the *fourteenth, in the afternoon.* Captain C—— was riding close by his side at the time he saw him fall. He was struck by a fragment of shell on the breast, and never spoke after he was hit. He was buried at the Dilkoosha; and on a wooden cross, erected by his friend, Lieutenant R——, of the 9th Lancers, at the head of his grave, were cut the initials 'G. W.,' and the date of his death the '14th of November, 1857.'

"The War Office finally made the correction as to the date of death, but not until more than a year after the event occurred. Mr. Wilkinson, having occasion to apply for an additional copy

of the certificate in April, 1857,[1] found it in exactly the same words as I have given, only that the 14th of November had been substituted for the 15th.[2]

"This extraordinary narrative was obtained by me direct from the parties themselves. The widow of Captain Wheatcroft kindly consented to examine and correct the manuscript, and allowed me to inspect a copy of Captain G——'s letter, giving the particulars of her husband's death. To Mr. Wilkinson, also, the manuscript was submitted, and he assented to its accuracy as far as he is concerned. I have neglected no precaution, therefore, to obtain for it the warrant of authenticity.

"It is perhaps the only example on record where the appearance of what is usually termed a ghost proved the means of correcting an erroneous date in the despatches of a Commander-in-Chief, and of detecting an inaccuracy in the certificate of a War Office."

Malleson, in his "History of the Mutiny,"[3] gives a note which I cannot help thinking

[1] Surely 1859.—AUTHOR.

[2] "The originals of both these certificates are in my possession; the first bearing the date 30th January, 1858, and certifying as already shown to the 15th; the second, dated April 5th, 1859, and testifying to the 14th.—R. D. OWEN."

[3] Vol. ii. book ii. chap. ii.

must allude, though there is a discrepancy in the name, to the hero of this story, as it seems so in keeping with his psychic appearance to his wife. Malleson has been telling how Sir Colin, whose *point d'appui* was the Dilku-sha, or Heart's Delight, on the evening of November 14, having made arrangements for holding the ground up to the edge of the canal, which he had won, had ordered a night bivouac. Little's brigade of cavalry, however, had scarcely dismounted, before the enemy came down in great numbers, and with several guns, over the bridge. But Adrian Hope, with his infantry brigade, and the artillery, was ready for them. "The cavalry were handy. As each successive regiment came up, it lined the banks of the canal." Peel's and Bouchier's guns on high ground to the left of the bridge directed a concentric fire where the enemy were massed, and speedily "crushed" them out of this position. Adrian Hope formed up his infantry, drove them with heavy loss across the bridge, and secured a lodgment on the other side. The attack had failed.

Now for Malleson's note.

"In this action our force lost two very promising officers—Captain Mayne, of the Bengal Artillery, and Captain Wheatley, of the

Carabineers, doing duty with the 9th Lancers. A few hours before, Wheatley, talking with some comrades of the approaching Christmas, had remarked, 'I wonder how many of us will then be alive?' He was a very gallant officer."

In the Annual Army List for 1857–8, published April 1, 1857, Captain German Wheatcroft appears in the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons. There is no Wheatley in the cavalry. The Annual Army List for 1858–9, published April 1, 1858, gives Captain G. Wheatcroft as having died since the last publication, date not stated, and puts his regiment as the 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabineers).

The monthly Army List of November, 1857, gives German Wheatcroft as a captain in the 6th Dragoon Guards, and shows no Wheatcroft nor Wheatley in the 6th Inniskillings. He continues in the list in January, 1858, being first omitted in February, 1858.

Hart's Army List for 1858 shows Wheatcroft in 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabineers), and in a note of his war services, says he served in the 6th Dragoons in the Crimea. Hart of 1859 omits Wheatcroft, but he does not appear under the list of casualties.

It appears, therefore, that he was transferred

from the Inniskilling to the Carabineers about July, 1857.

Throughout there is no other Wheatcroft, and therefore it seems evident that the hero of the ghost story and of Malleson's anecdote were one and the same man. Psychical Society, please note.

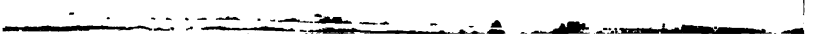
A FIRE within and the caladiems without, their yellow and red stripes on their great leaves, and the coleus, gaudy in the verandah; and, to quote the "Compleat Gardñer" of 1649 for September 1, "for Flowers we have now great store of Tube roses, asters, or *occulus christi's*, and French marygolds."

Last evening late, I heard the chitel give the peculiar little bark which he rarely utters in captivity, but which the Wild Man of the Woods tells me is such a common sound in happy hunting-grounds in the foot-hills. The bearer went out to see what ailed him, and reported that the dear little beast seemed very terrified, and kept glancing round in the darkness and making queer noises. Probably a wolf was prowling round. *Wolf Monath* was the Saxon name for January, because "people are wont always in that month to be in more danger of being devoured by wolves than in any other," says Verstegan.

Recently two children were carried off from the *grass-cut's* huts behind the barracks, about half a mile from here, on the edge of the *maidan*, or waste, so I suppose the beasts are on the prowl now the nights are dark and long.

# FEBRUARY

"Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."



## FEBRUARY

MORE deluges! Fill-dyke has kept up its name even in the East. The roads are flooded and the deep side ditches full, and carriages drove into them returning from a dinner-party at the mess last night. I sat in comfort in my sealskin, with a coat over it, watching the polo this afternoon.

The famine has come—partially. Anyhow, dearth and starvation stalk the land. But the belated crops are ripening, so Government will not do anything to help; but the pinch, though short, is sharp. A subscription has been opened, and so grain is distributed by private charity. Each morning a crowd of gaunt, half-naked wretches, with protruding bones and joints, swarm out of the villages into cantonments, and some ebb into our garden. We cannot possibly feed all, so I drive away the adults, and do what I can for the children. It is heart-breaking to see these miserable atoms. Those that have sufficient vitality seem to have become purely wolfish. We feed about twenty

little skeletons daily with the *gram* the horses eat. How they grab and scuffle for it!

A letter from Guramabad tells me things are much worse there. The natives creep into the gardens to die in the night, and Yseulte tells me that she has to have hers searched every morning for corpses!

I met a wolf quite close last night. The Captain Sahib and I were walking home—for a wonder, one walks so little—after tennis at a bungalow down the road. Something like a huge pariah dog sprang up out of the deep drain, cut to carry off the water from the road in the rains. It crossed the road just behind me. Involuntarily I edged nearer my husband, for it looked as if it were coming for me. Seen nearer, it did not look quite like a dog, and it was too large and bold for a jackal. The Captain Sahib is convinced it was a wolf, arisen from its noontide lair in the *dhal* crop, and slinking off towards the deep ravine which leads to the slaughter-house, and which is haunted by these beasts. According to Scandinavian lore, then, I have been lucky. The wolf was dedicated to Odin, the giver of victory, and to see one was a good sign.

But the stories one hears of their stealing

into the houses and carrying off children, make one feel creepy. One is so unprotected in a house—only a curtain or a grass *chick* in the ever-open doors between one's bed and the outside world.

MY garden scents the neighbourhood with a forest of sweet peas and mignonette, grown from my English seeds. The *portulaca*, many-hued, red, yellow, and white, and closing at night, are very gay in sunny spots in the verandah in pots. Yet we still have fires these covered days, when the keen winds blow; and in the late afternoon, when I sit at garden-parties watching the eternal badminton, I am glad of a fur cloak.

Last week I went to a flower-show at "Cæsar's Garden," part of the old royal palace. This is a great pile of buildings surrounding an immense quadrangle—"a very fine palace," as Captain Wolseley saw it in the Third Relief, "with beautiful gardens. There in front of the main buildings was a canal with marble sides and a very handsome carved marble bridge over it. The imposing and beautiful throne which is now in the king's garden at Windsor Castle stood near it."

The buildings round the square are all in stucco, and in execrable taste—a jumble of architecture, Italian, Moorish, Venetian—gilt domes, battlements, arcades, female figures and

CÆSAR'S GARDEN

UNIV. OF MICH.

fishes: such a contrast to the chaste pink stone-work of Agra, Delhi, and Mathúra.

Facing each other over every arch are the curved fishes, the Oudh royal crest, for Cæsar's Garden was built in 1848 by the late king. It took two years to complete, and cost eighty lacs of rupees.

The flower-show was held in the centre of the square in the "Silvery Summer-house," a picturesque white stone erection of open arches and heavily eaved roof, formerly paved with silver, now used as a public town hall, for meetings, etc. We promptly sought out our own special exhibit, a *dâli* composed of the greatest variety of vegetables. Of other people's contributions I especially admired the roses, the heartsease, and the petunias. Then we turned away to "Cæsar's Pleasure," a small building in the south-west angle of the quadrangle, once the abode of the ex-king's favourite *mahal*, Mashuk-ul-Sultan. The place has sad memories for English people; for here were shut up the unfortunate party captured at Dhorera. A monument erected outside the north gate of Cæsar's Garden marks the place where they met their death on September 24, 1857. But vengeance has repaid, and the favourite sultana's palace is now given over

to white-trousered baboos in patent leather shoes, as the office of the city magistrate and the police, and the public treasury.

I so constantly feel this sharp contrast between the present and the not-so-far-away past—the gay gardens round deserted palaces; the shot-riddled pleasure-houses, with loop-holed walls; the laughing, chattering Englishmen and women riding and driving about them just as before; the iron heel of the conqueror planted on the neck of the salaaming native; but, in between, that awful interlude of massacre!

I was taking our own particular "Paget, M.P.," temporarily encamped in our spare room, last week to see the sights round by the "Heart's Delight" along the Martinière road, the line of Sir Colin Campbell's advance. As we drove along, I pointed out to him one of the mementoes of the Mutiny which lie scattered about the environs of the city—a British grave with a neat headstone, and secured by a stone wall. I mentioned the name of him who lay there.

"He was my cousin," exclaimed my guest. "Let me stop and see his grave."

I HAVE been painfully reminded, in this glorious weather, of the heat that is to come; for I have caused the *brinjals* to be sown, likewise the melons, the latter in two-foot-deep holes round the well, in good black earth mixed with stable litter. Also the first of the *lal-saj* seed has been put in—a most useful vegetable. We eat the leaves like spinach, but especially in *chichki*, or vegetable curry.

My narrow border beneath the verandah wall is now quite filled with pricked-out annuals, and in due time the house will appear to rise from a band of glowing colour.

We had our last paperchase yesterday. The pig-sticking season begins at once, and that will absorb all our energies and horseflesh, as the meets are a long way off. We had a nice course, out across the river, over green grass enclosures, and through little mango and guava *topes* (groves). But it is quite time we left off, for we had to avoid riding over crops, and especially the precious poppy fields. This, of course, is not the "Corn Rose," or the "Red Mantle of Ceres," or "Joan Silver Pin," of our English harvest fields, "scattered o'er the fields of corn," says

Corsley, "that all the wants of men may be easily satisfied, and that bread and sleep may go together." No; this is the white poppy, grown to fill the hubble-bubbles and the opium dens. Old Gerard, in his "Generall Historie of Plantes," 1633, tells us that "a caudle made of the seeds of the wild poppie made into almond milk and so given, causeth sleep."

The odious (to horsemen and women) cultivation of the melon has been begun, moreover, by the patient *ryot*. By river banks, in low-lying alluvial spots, he is laying his traps in the shape of carefully disguised pits in the innocent-looking soft black soil, into which the horse flounders up to his knee, while his rider executes a more or less graceful toss. But, all the same, we shall be thankful enough for iced melons at every meal when the hot weather begins.

Really, only the very heartless can gallop ruthlessly over Indian fields. They are the result of such patient microscopic husbandry—a rough basket, one iron tool, the implements—little fields sunk, and divided by raised banks, and, round and about each, runnels, so carefully filled morn and eve from the well in the corner—runnels sometimes close enough together to form the celebrated "gridiron

lep," very trappy for a horse not a clever fencer.

To my mind there is something pathetic about these oases of cultivation about the villages, set in the great wastes of plain, dotted here and there with Government-planted mango groves. For the Hindoo *ryot* hovers on the verge of famine. A monsoon that failed, Christmas rains too light, and he slips over the brink.

> "The ploughman settled his share
> More deep in the sun-dried clod,
> The wheat and the cattle are all my share,
> The rest is the will of God."

IT has suddenly become much hotter. A fortnight ago it was 50° at noon in the rooms without a fire. Now I am wearing washing dresses, and am shut up in the house from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is dull and dark as a prison. Outside, in the middle of the day, blow premature dusty winds.

I have added to my menagerie of pets. The Captain Sahib brought me a litter of baby wolves, paying the native the usual Government reward for them. They are like very ugly, ill-bred little kittens, with black bullet heads and short, iron-grey furry coats. Already they draw up their lips, and show the gums where their fangs will be, in a very hereditary manner. I have introduced them to a Maw's feeding-bottle, but they will be very difficult to rear.

Of the wild live things that come to pay me a visit when I sit quietly in the verandah, I think the hoopoo the most entrancing. So pert, so perky are they, so pompously dainty in their tiny way, with their luxuriant nodding crest, and their gentle manner of introducing themselves by name, and they do not encroach, or take liberties, like the squirrels.

*VALENTINE'S DAY.*—Beautiful Belinda came tripping across in the dust from the parental bungalow behind the millingtonias yesterday, out of calling hours—beautiful Belinda, who can wear a hideous mushroom *solar tope* with impunity. She flung herself gracefully into a long cane couch in the verandah, clasped her hands behind her pretty head, and began confidences. Belinda wanted me to make up her mind for her. I declined, but instead gave her a piece of mine; for I consider Belinda's general and particular behaviour most reprehensible, even in the land where the "compleat dangler," of both sexes, has raised the gentle art of flirtation to a science.

That art which "dallied with the innocence of love" is, of course, no new thing. We find archaic traces of it in the earliest Scripture history, and the practise was extensively in vogue in the courts of the Jewish sovereigns. But it was not till the middle of the seventeenth century that the tactics of the loafer on "the primrose path of dalliance" were epitomized into a word which has since become general in more languages than one. Lord Chesterfield, writing in the *World* (the ancient *World* of course)

about 1754, says that he "assisted at the birth of that most significant word 'flirtation' which dropped from the most beautiful mouth in the world." The owner of the mouth in question was the fair Lady Frances Shirley, and Lord Chesterfield, as every one knows, no mean judge, is supposed to have spoken from personal aquaintance with it. The lady, however, merely coined a happy abstract noun from a common one. "Fan flirts" were common enough in her day, powdered belles, to whom the fan, with its language of jerks and flirts and flutters, was as the snuff-box and the "clouded cane" to the beaux of the period.

In the days of queues and powder it would seem to have been the woman who was the flirt. But nowadays, like education in general, and other home arts and industries, the "gentle art" has spread down the social scale, and the "compleat dangler" knows no sex, or class, or clime. There was, indeed, an intermediate period, when, among the respectable middle classes, with whom the arts in those days made slow progress, he was almost always of the male persuasion. One cannot imagine one of Miss Austen's heroines flirting.

In India, we—to wit, Belinda—have vastly improved upon our fathers—and mothers. All

roads, however, do not lead to Rome, whatever young Sabretasche avers to Belinda on the subject. All dangling does not end in marriage with the person dangled for, or with. I reprimanded Belinda, but it is borne in upon me that it is better to have dangled and jilted than never to have dangled at all. For then one has left unopened a page of life, has lost what is doubtless the *sauce-piquante* of society. But playing with fire, I tell her, is apt to burn the fingers. The dangler is sooner or later hooked and landed with her own bait, in spite of her fixed intention to dangle wisely, but not too well.

Belinda listens, and smiles—*the* smile—and calmly announces that from her point of view the "compleat dangler" will be the one thing wanting in that state of perfection in which there is no marrying or giving in marriage.

I give in. Without going so far as to say that a happy marriage depends upon broken hearts, I am quite aware that one cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs. It is distinctly advisable that young people should not be obliged to marry in order to find out if they like each other. It is better for them to know each other before the die is cast, to make their game, as saith the croupier, before *rien ne va*

*plus.* Viewed in this light the enormous amount of flirtation, pure and simple, which pervades the social atmosphere, is merely a means to an end, like the "walking out" of the lower classes in England, which by no means implies betrothal. So I, myself, as regards Belinda, take heart o' grace, however deficient I may yet believe her to be in that graceless article.

And I let her prattle on of her partners at dance and game, while the ring-doves cooed approvingly among the greenery of the *jaffri* work, and the parrots forebore to shriek.

# MARCH

"For the sun shall scorch, and the fierce winds blow,
And the pest strike sudden."

# MARCH

STEALTHILY it is stealing upon us—the heat. It is 82° in the drawing-room as I write at 3 p.m. (the empty hour between tiffin and the garden-party, or polo time, when all good *qui-hais* should be asleep), and that though the house has been shut up since ten. The wind is high, driving down the road clouds of dust, with which the red-aproned *bhisti*, watering feebly with the trickle of his goat-skin, cannot grapple, and which are dreadfully bad for my garden.

It is too hot to drive or play tennis before five o'clock, and when I came in from riding this morning at 7.30, the sun felt quite powerful.

But the nights are delicious. The house is open all night long. Only a *chick* (a screen of green rushes) intervenes between me and the verandah. The outside world makes itself felt. The murmuring of a myriad insects, the bell-like croaking of the frogs, both continuous recitatives in different keys, are suddenly broken

into by a solo from a jackal prowling round, to which is promptly added a chorus from all his fellows, far and near—a hellish din which banishes sleep.

The garden is almost sickening with the heavy scent of the orange bloom—

> "Fresh gales and gentle airs—from their wings
> Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub."

With the increasing heat my English sweet peas and mignonette have vanished. But I still have some very fine beds of white petunia in bloom.

For the last week we have had strawberries for breakfast. Only a few at a time, for the plants were only put in last year. They are a trifle insipid, and, according to John Parkinson, ought to make one feel very calm and contented, for in his "Terrestrial Paradise," he says that they are eaten—

"As a rare service, whereunto claret wine, cream or milke, is added with sugar as any one liketh. They are good for perturbation of the spirit."

If so, I really need them just now! For my native Redfern has been more than usually trying. This domestic each morning spreads a dirty sheet in my bedroom verandah. Here

he squats cross-legged, carefully concealed from the eye of the caller, for I would not for worlds have Mrs. Major de Ferret spy my latest confection till it bursts upon her at some "big dinner." Armed with a huge horn thimble, and holding the work in his often grimy toe, he stitches away elaborately, copying models marvellously—too marvellously, indeed, for on inspection this morning I found that he had even copied in a patch into my new ball frock!

But a more serious matter has also irritated me. The fiat this morning went forth from the *Gran Commandatore* that the Captain Sahib is not to get his leave yet. We must resign ourselves to doing some of the hot weather.

A FEW nights ago we were invited to a kind of native memorial-service, garden-party combined! The Mohurrum has begun. The advent of the new moon has been announced by beat of drum among the Mohammedan retainers in European cantonments, ushering in the Islamite "month of mourning," as the Celts called November. This solemn fast commemorates the murder, in Turkish Arabia, of Hasain and Hosein, the Prophet's grandsons. The story of the murder shows why Mohammedans hate lizards and love spiders. The two brothers were being pursued across the desert, and took shelter in a well, across the top of which a spider immediately wove a web. The enemies came up, and seeing the web, imagined that the fugitives could not possibly be down the well. But, on looking in, they saw a number of lizards hurrying up the sides; so they concluded some one must be down there to frighten the reptiles, and after further search, the brothers were got up and killed.

The Oudh Mohammedans are chiefly of the Shiahs, and the Mohurrum is very strictly observed by that sect. The term means "most sacred," and is a fast and solemn

mourning, beginning on the evening of the new moon of the first month. It lasts ten days, during which *taziyahs*, or biers, are exhibited. These are made up of bamboo or woodwork, and adorned with gaudy tinsels, and are supposed to represent the tomb of Hosein at Karbala-a in Turkish Arabia. On the tenth day, the *taziyahs* are gaily lighted up and carried in procession to be buried at one of the Karbalas, so called, around the city. During these processions the most furious encounters take place between different parties; neither will give way, and the extra police have their work cut out for them. The grounds about the Karbala are given over for purposes of burial of the *taziyahs*, and the nearer the cenotaph, the more sacred the spot; hence hot and dusty fights of the Faithful to get their *taziyahs* as close as possible. Add to this, the violent demonstrations of frantic grief, the attempts at violence, and, perhaps, vengeance, the din of divers drums, the blare of trumpets, the tinkling of cymbals and the babel of tongues, and you can imagine what it is like to drive in the environs of the city at Mohurrum time. The neighbourhood of the Talkutora Karbala, across the canal near the Khánpúr road, is especially to be avoided. It was built

in 1800, and stands in an enclosure surrounded with cloisters, the imitation tomb in the middle, and on the south side a watch-tower some thirty feet high, richly wrought in arabesque and coloured in red, probably to imitate the famous red granite Kootub Minar at Delhi. Round the summit is a balcony, whence five times in the twenty-four hours comes the voice of the Muezzim calling upon the Faithful to turn their faces towards Mecca and to fall in prayer.

The Talkutora Karbala is the most fashionable burial-place of the *taziyahs*, but the Karbala of Nasiru-din Haider is also much affected. Its two tall, unfinished towers rise like great factory chimneys across the river opposite the Fish Market Fort. It is a real mausoleum, for in the central room of an imposing massive structure, surrounded by the tombs of his courtiers and household, lies the second and the most despicable of all the Oudh monarchs, who brought the kingdom to such a pass that, in 1831, Lord William Bentinck told him that, unless he altered his ways and governed better, the Company would have to step in and govern for him. Nasiru-din drank himself to death, and in the confusion of the contest that ensued for the throne, found no grave save his own

unfinished Karbala, followed by the hatred and the groans of the disaffected populace. The place is rapidly falling into ruin, and given over to the flying foxes by day and the haunt of jackals by night. Occasionally one finds a few withered flowers or a smouldering taper on the tomb, where, as in the stilted language of the early century—

> "No bribes can bid the incense burn
> Round titled frailty's wintry's urn;
> Oblivion's secret cancer steals
> To blot the useless name which vice reveals."

The upper ten of Lakhnao keep their Mohurrum at the Hosein-a-bad, with chanting of memorial verses in praise of the departed brothers, away beyond the Fish Market Fort. It was thither we were invited. As we drove down after dinner we found great excitement everywhere. Vast crowds had congregated at the Shah Najif mausoleum, which, like all the other *imámbára* and tombs in the city, was brilliantly illuminated with thousands of coloured lamplets. The people were flocking in to the burial-place of the first King of Oudh, who lies under an enormous dome. An enlightened and successful ruler, the patron of literature and art, both Eastern and Western, he lent the East Indian Company one crore

of rupees (£1,000,000), the interest to be spent on this festival, which is also the anniversary of his death. But to me, as we drove by, the Shah Nujif, glittering in light, was interesting in a far different way. Hither, on November 16, the rebels stood at bay, immovable, barring the way to the relieving force. "The Shah Najif *must* be taken," says Sir Colin Campbell to the 93rd. And so on to it rushed the gallant Highlanders, and with them Captain Peel and the crew and the big guns of the *Shannon*. They made short work of the strong massive fortifications which the rebels had improvised round the mosque, and opened the way to the Residency and to the meeting of Sir Colin Campbell with Outram and Havelock.

We drove on along the river bank. Night was being turned into day. Our way was continually blocked by smaller processions of the poorer classes of Mohammedans staggering along under their tawdry *taziyahs*. But at the Hosein-a-bad everything is done regardless of expense, as King Mahomet, Ali Shah, about the middle of the last century, bequeathed large sums to keep up the buildings and the ceremonies. Leaving the carriage, we passed under some Moorish gateways into a large quadrangle in the same light and fantastic style affected by

THE HOSEINABAD GARDEN

UNIV. OF MICH.

the Oudh nawabs of the nineteenth century. Thence through a lofty gateway of three pointed arches, richly wrought in stucco, into a smaller square, with the *imámbára*, or mausoleum, at one side. It is divided lengthways into three rooms, with smaller compartments in the ends, and the partition walls are arcaded and profusely ornamented in arabesque. The central room contains the tomb of Mahomet Ali Shah and his mother, and in the innermost compartment on a raised floor a *taziyah* of silver and *tabút*, or cradle, covered with net, in which are exhibited the royal insignia of the departed monarch. At the other end is the Mohurrum memorial *taziyah* of wood, which is partly buried and renewed every year. The vaulted roof, covered in the centre with a gilded dome, was hung with chandeliers and coloured globes of European make. Pier glasses adorned the walls, and the floor was a beautiful mosaic of black and white marble.

We passed out on to a raised and open verandah on which, in honour of the occasion, was erected a tapestry awning supported by poles encased in silver. Emerging from the dimly lighted mysteriousness of the arched and vaulted mausoleum, we looked down upon a scene of fairyland. Twelve thousand rupees a

night are spent on the festival. Brilliantly lit up with thousands of tiny lamps in coloured glass lay, below us, the large quadrangle. In the centre glittered an ornamental tank of water surrounded by plots of flowers and crossed by a light iron bridge, and each arch and span and flower-bed was outlined in lights, which were reflected in the water. The flowers themselves were chiefly roses and flowering shrubs, with here and there some annuals; and marigolds, of course, were not lacking. The whole may be taken as the *ne plus ultra* of native ornamental gardening. Of grass or lawn there was not a vestige. Over all there floated—

"An amber scent of odorous perfume."

THAT hot weather pest, the koel, has begun to practice its scales in the garden.

"Brain fever! Brain fever! Brain fever!" it screeches, each stanza higher, and more out of tune than the last, till it ends in an agonizing shriek. Not only does it torture one's ears, but it recalls horrid memories and raises dreadful forebodings of punkahs and *tatties* and general scorching.

Waterfield, in his Indian ballads, has attempted, vainly, methinks, to render the koel poetical—

> "Oh, youths and maidens, rise and sing!
> The koel is come who leads the spring;
> The buds that were sleeping, his voice have heard,
> And the tale is borne by each nesting bird.
> The trees of the forest have all been told,
> They have donned their mantles of scarlet and gold,
> To welcome him back they are bravely dressed,
> But he loves the blossoming mango best."

We have had two or three storms, which mean the ushering in of the heat. A grand thing is a tropical thunder-storm by night! How the thunder rolls and reverberates for hours continuously, and the lightning, so vivid and so blue, flaring up the room every few minutes like day!

Yesterday, in my bedroom, I slew an enormous spider, as large—toe to toe—as a sheet of notepaper. I also evicted several frogs, bent upon taking up their hot-weather abode under the cool recess of a cabinet in the drawing-room. How I sympathize with Pharaoh and the Egyptians!

There was a full moon last night, and a gorgeous night it was—"of cloudless climes and starry skies"—grasshoppers and frogs in full blast. I sat up late in the verandah enjoying the cool, and watching, but in vain, for the light flashes from the marigold and nasturtiums which Darwin writes about.

"One evening," he says of Mr. Haggren, the French scientist, "he perceived a faint flash of light repeatedly dart from a marigold, and, to be assured that it was no deception of the eye, he placed a man near him with orders to make a signal at the moment he observed the light. They both saw it constantly, at the same moment. The light was most brilliant on marigolds of an orange or flame colour, but scarcely visible on pale ones. The following flowers emitted flashes more or less vivid in order :—

"The marigold, Garden Nasturtium, Orange Lily, and African marigold. From the rapidity

of the flash and other circumstances, it might be conjectured that there is something of electricity in the phenomenon."

I watched, as I say, in vain. Perhaps the season was unsuitable. Mr. Haggren, Darwin says, remarked the phenomenon in Europe, "in the months of July and August at sunset and for half an hour later, when the atmosphere was clear; but after a rainy day, or when the air was heavy with vapour, nothing of it was to be seen." Here, in India, sunset, or half an hour after sunset, would be a most unpropitious moment. It is the time when the natives of all castes are busy cooking their one and only meal, and the atmosphere of the compound is laden with the peculiarly offensive smoke of their cow-dung fuel.

Last night we were at an outdoor evening party at the Very Great Sahib's. He boasts one of the few real grass lawns in the place. It cometh up like a flower each autumn, by dint of much toil on the part of the patient *bhisti*. But in April the hot wind passeth over it, and it is gone! The party may have been said to have been given in honour of the lawn, for it was prettily lit up, native fashion, with hundreds of little coloured lamps. We had the cavalry band, and a nigger entertainment by British

soldiers. Some people thought the sitting about on the much irrigated lawn might produce fever, and I felt it chilly in spite of a fur cloak. Yet I am now obliged to have the house shut up from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and even then it is 76° at noon, and I have begun to ride at 5.30 a.m.

A lovely bunch of big orange-red roses had been sent me from my next-door neighbour's garden to wear at the Very Great Sahib's party. The Turks attribute the colour of the rose to the blood of Mahomet, I find. The Chinese plant roses on graves. According to Persian folk-lore, the nightingale utters a plaintive cry every time a rose is plucked. Attar, a poet of Persia, has a tale of how all the birds appeared before Solomon, and said that they were unable to sleep because of the midnight wailing of the nightingale, and of how the latter, when questioned, confessed that his love for the rose was the cause of his grief. But here, in the plains of India, with the roses all around one, scenting the air and rejoicing the eye with a splendour unknown in other lands, I find no traces of this oriental romance hanging about them. The brain-fever bird's shrieks replace the love-lorn notes of the nightingale!

A GRAND GARDEN

UNIV. OF MICH.

"Farewell! a word that must be and hath been—
A sound which makes us linger—yet—farewell!"

THE punkahs are up! The *kuskas* grass *tattis*, the therm-antidote, and the punkah-pulling coolies have taken possession of my verandah. My days of enjoying it are over, and only the nights are left to me; for the hot weather has come on suddenly. It is 81° to 83° in the house; 105° in the west, the sunny verandah, at 5 p.m., and 96° in the east verandah at the same time. The hot wind scorches my face when I drive out at 6 p.m.

"In spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of leave!"

It is the one burden of conversation as one sits at the bandstand or the polo ground, or watching people melt themselves at tennis. Every one is flitting home or taking houses in the hills. The convalescent detachment, as it is called, of white-faced invalid soldiers, young recruits, and whiter women and children, marched away down the Mall days ago *en route* for a hill sanatorium. The women, strange to say, in most cases were loth to leave "the regiment, which is their home, their society,

and they were grumbling over the journey, after the manner of their kind. They are more or less a poor feckless folk, their English physique enfeebled by the climate, and their moral fibre enervated by the unwonted possession of a servant or two.

India is the land of partings. And yet, after all, partings are with us more or less all our lives. They are of many kinds. Lovers part broken hearted; at least, for a time. Married couples part, assisted by their lawyers. School girls part sadly, like Amelia, from the Miss Pinkertons, in floods of tears, and with promises to write, and write often. We part with a civil housemaid at the conclusion of our visit, with the boots at the hotel, but our parting is mitigated by the expectancy, or uncertainty as to the value of our tip. We part with old servants despairingly, convinced we shall never know again where anything is kept. We part with old clothes, especially old boots, with a wrench. We all part with our money with regret. A boy's earliest parting, does not he recall it, fraught with the irrepressible tear, and with secret misgivings as to Latin declensions and future switchings, but yet not unmitigated by the delightful possession of his first watch, and the fleeting joys of his first hamper!

Painter, historian, and actor have immortalized partings—St. Paul and the Elders on the Asia Minor beach, Charles I. and his children at Whitehall, Napoleon and the swooning Josephine at Fontainebleau ; and it must ever be a moot point if partings are more painful to take part in than to witness. Of the former, every one can recollect the pang —when the great liner slid away from the tender, the trooper glided from the quay, the shrill shriek of the engine pierced our hearts, and the clang of the railway bell sounded like a knell. Or again, when in the hush of a glimmering dawn, the candle burnt low in the socket at the bedside where we watched. Finally, we know that to one and all of us must inevitably come, at the last, the "great divide."

Yet the involuntary spectator suffers not a little from the saying of good-bye. It is part of the price we pay for the pleasures of travelling. It haunts every landing stage and railway platform. How often, ensconced in our corner behind our newspaper, have we not been incommoded, both physically and mentally, by the long drawn-out farewell at the carriage window! How inane sound the oft-repeated last words, the effusive endearments, the final messages for the absent, the reiterated injunction

to "take care of yourself!" How we have longed for the guard to wave his flag, for the whistle to shriek! How fervently have we not wished that the individuals concerned would imitate the example of Byron, the poet of partings, and his nameless fair, and part at least silently, if not in tears!

Ever since Homer parted Hector and Andromache, poets have positively revelled in partings. Around "farewell" Shakespeare has written some of his mightiest scenes. With both English and German versifiers it is a specially favourite theme. Language is such a help! "Parted" rhymes so conveniently with "broken hearted," and *scheiden* with *beiden*. After all, who knows how much of poetic sentiment is not an affair of vowels?

All this moralizing is the outcome of the threatened departure of Belinda with her parents to "the hills." Young Sabretasche and the "Scilly Islanders'" nice boy have been sitting several consecutive mornings wailing into my sympathetic ear. I shall miss Her Minxness myself muchly.

MY wolf nurselings are no more! One by one the evil-looking atoms succumbed. Perhaps it is as well. Had they attained maturity they must have been destroyed. One can never trust a wolf.

In this topsy-turvy land the deciduous trees on the Mall are now shedding their foliage—

> "Boughs are daily rifled
> By the dusky thieves,
> And the Book of Nature
> Getteth short of leaves."

But *en revanche* they are flowering beautifully. The tall *semal*, or cotton tree (*Bombox malabaricum*), is disporting itself in large scarlet blooms like huge water-lilies on its bare branches. The *dâhk* (*Butea frondosa*) has arrayed itself in orange-and-flame coloured flowers with brown velvet cups and stalks. The *millingtonias* (*hortensis*), each side of the road between me and Belinda's bungalow, are scenting the air with the delicious white waxy blossom with which they are snowed over. The lilac-tree acacia is a joy to look upon. Another large tree has brought forth the purple passion flower. Every one knows the pretty lore of the passion flower, connected with the sufferings of Our Lord.

It pleases me that mine should be in flower this—Holy Week.

"The leaf symbolizes the spear.

"The five anthers, the five wounds.

"The tendrils, the cords and whips.

"The column of the ovary, the pillar of the cross.

"The stamens, the hammers.

"The fleshy threads within the flowers, the crown of thorns.

"The calyx, the glory, or nimbus.

"The white tint, purity.

"The blue tint, heaven.

"How the flower keeps open three days; St. Matt. xii. 40, or the three years' ministry."

But puritanical old Parkinson thought otherwise in 1640.

"Some superstitious Jesu-ites would faine make me beleeve that in the flower of this plant are to be seen all the markes of Our Saviour's Passion; and therefore call it the *Flos passionis:* and to that end have caused figures to be drawn and printed with all the parts proportioned out, as thornes, nailes, speare, whippe, pillar, etc., in it, and all as true as the Sea burnes, which you may well perceive by the true figure, taken to the life of the plant, compared to the figures set forth by the Jesu-ites."

The bungalows are vying in colour with the roads. A full-scented clematis, and the *bigonia grandiflora*, with its orange trumpet-shaped flowers, are swarming up the verandah trellis. The *Bougainvilla spectabilis*, with its handsome downy stem and leaves, and magenta and pale pink flowers, flourishes, as doth the trailing moonflower, a giant convolvulus, asleep during the hot hours of daylight, but starring at night the pillars of the entrance with its large white blossoms.

All these large blooms are the haunt of the tiny bee-eaters and humming-birds. I see them darting in and out of the blossoms like an animated flower, or a mere tuft of iridescent colour with a bill at the end of it. Especially do they affect my pink-and-white paper-flower shrub.

# APRIL

"Proud pied April, dressed in all his trim."

# APRIL

THE hot winds are in full blast. Before them the English seeded flowers and vegetables, "scorched by the brand of the blinding heat," have gone down shrivelled. Only the native vegetables will yet awhile hold up their heads.

I am writing in a darkened room, the white wings of the *punkah* flying overhead and rustling my paper. My verandah is sloppy. Ever and anon comes the *bhisti* with his goatskin, and hurls its contents at the fast-drying *kuskas* grass *tattis* fitted into each of the window-doors. He likewise drenches the therm-antidote, which whirls in the dining-room door. From the north verandah roof swing the soda-water bottles and the wine bottles, in wet baskets, to keep cool. From 7 a.m. till 7 p.m. the house is hermetically sealed. It is 80° in the room as I write, and 100° in the shaded verandah outside.

Last night I had my bed carried into the garden, thinking with Francesca that—

> "Better than tossing in that vacant room
> Is this cool air and fragrance of the dawn."

The jackals kept waking me with their yells ; but, indeed, a sudden chill, necessitating a blanket, did come on before daylight.

> " Air is coming—
> Ah !
> At last,
> Delicious.
> There is mercy from the West,"

as Mariamne's Jewish maidens gasped.

And this is April ! What will it be in June before the rains come ?

> " Oh ! to be in England, now that April's there ! "

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's cry from Italy is echoed from India by her listless, whitefaced, gasping countrywomen.

The *loquâts* are ripe, a most delicious fruit. For mine are the grafted kind, and the seeds inside have been reduced to a minimum. But my grapes are a failure. It is very difficult to grow any so far down country as this.

Afterwards I stood over the *malli*, as he sowed the hot-weather and rainy seeds—portulacas, marigolds, and the *ipomeas cærulea*, *Bona Nox*, and *grandiflora*.

The *Bauhinia alba*, or white *Kachar*, is in flower ; also the *Vahlii*, rampant creepers with

ornamental foliage and loose panicles of whitish flowers.

The Captain Sahib has started a quail-pit in a corner of the garden. One's appetite is already jaded, and the everlasting chicken begins to pall. So, besides shooting all he can among the tall crops, he buys them alive from the quail-bagger, who snares them at this season, and brings them round in a basket for sale. In a little cavern, larger below than above, are imprisoned, to fatten, these nice little round quail. It distresses me, however, that the pretty little things have to be kept in the dark pit, or they would fight, like the Kilkenny cats, to extermination.

We have had what Our Paddy calls a "ghreat" morning pig-sticking, a rare event round Lakhnao. In the boar-hunting season those who can, get away, train some forty miles, and go out with the Khánpúr Tent Club, one of the best in India, and have fine sport in an ideal country, with plenty of pig preserved for them. But this part of Oudh—the garden of India—is too closely cultivated to give pig the covert they most affect. But when His Royal Highness came out to India he had some good sport shown him on the Onao side, the spot whence Sir Colin Campbell's victorious

army advanced to the Second Relief of the city.

This morning of ours was due to a rumour of a boar seen near the Red Road Swamp, brought in by his myrmidons to the Mighty Nimrod. Thanks to a timely Hindoo festival, the Mighty One was free for one day from the stuffy atmosphere where he is pent toiling for his prospective pension and K.C.S.I. He kindly sent word to the Captain Sahib and Our Paddy. By sunrise the next morning we had driven the eleven miles to the meeting-place, where we found the *Rajah*, and my pony awaiting us by the roadside.

Do not expect me to tell of a serious day after pig, with a line of elephants to beat, a couple of hundred coolies, and many riders told off into parties of four. This was an informal affair, just an hour or two's riding before breakfast, three spears all told, and self to canter about behind, and not to get in anybody's way, including the boar's. I had donned my thinnest habit, with a thick wadded padding tacked down my spine, and a wadded curtain added behind to my enormous pith mushroom hat, to protect the nape of my neck. I must have looked a shade top-heavy on the pony, but no one thought anything

of appearances. The men wore white-drill breeches and cotton coat, made of the same material that I use for dusters for the house, and affected cork headgear various.

Khoodha Bux, acting in collusion with the Might Nimrod's *shikari*, had caught some dozen villagers, armed them with sticks and tomtoms (drums), and driven them into the tall jungle of Sara grass beyond the *jhil*. The Captain Sahib on *Rajah*, staunch to pig as are all Arabs, took up a position at one corner of the covert, and the others on the far side. The sun was barely up, but already made itself felt, and a heavy haze, prophetic of the coming heat, hung about the horizon. The beaters formed line, and began to beat down the covert, raising, quite as much in self-defence as in the interests of sport, a fearful din. Unarmed and almost unclothed, the desire to drive off, and out, any boar whose tusks might be lurking in the thick grass within a foot or two of their bare legs, filled them with zeal and ardour. They yelled, they banged their sticks and their tomtoms, they shouted derisive epithets to the boar and his ancestry. Mingled with the din came the whirring and the whirling of frightened winged creatures—peafowl, partridge, quail—rising in haste, and flying startled from their

roosts in every direction. But we sat our horses motionless as statues; the men, lance in rest. The tension was intense, likewise the horizontal rays of the sun upon one's back. Our only thought and care, however, what if the Mighty One had received a lying message from one of his prophets, and that there were no stray boar in the Red Road Jungle after all?

Suddenly there came a lull. You might, so to speak, have heard a pin drop, as a fine black boar with vicious-looking tusks, trotted solemnly out of the covert, in no particular haste, and with a *degagé* manner, as if he had not a gallop in him. There was something so contemptuous in his gait, so sniffy and supercilious a look about his mouth, that even I felt a longing to go for him. Some such effect I have known certain persons have upon their fellow-men. Swift produced it, I feel convinced; likewise Voltaire.

The Captain Sahib gave the boar a fair start, and then let the *Rajah* go. Simultaneously round the corner shot the Mighty Nimrod upon his Waler (Australian horse). The *Rajah* needed no urging, but the Waler had the legs of the little flea-bitten grey Arab, and led across the open waste till the pig turned sharply—*jinked*, is the term. The Waler would

not face him, and swerving, let in the Arab, who knew no fear of the beast of the fearful countenance, and the Captain Sahib "rode" piggy till the latter, getting blown, lost himself in a wheat crop. The pig had squatted, to again use the authorized expression. I now rode up to find a momentary lull and incoherency.

Suddenly there was a shout on my right. Before I was aware a huge black mass, thirty-three inches at the shoulder, with bristles erect, and murderous-looking tusks, came bearing down upon me in a literally white heat, for he was foaming at the mouth. The boar was charging.

Being defenceless, I incontinently turned and fled, putting my pony at his best pace. No one who has not seen a wild boar gallop can realize the speed at which they go. Apparently they "galump" along, heavily and woodenly, like Alice's White Knight. But mark him lollop across the open, while a sixteen-hand Waler toils after him in vain! See him hop ungainly over an eight-foot water-course, which the horse lays himself out to take. So I galloped.

But at that moment Our Paddy came up on his handy little country-bred with a true Irish

yell, and went for the boar. Piggy returned the compliment, charging viciously. A good boar this, a warrantable boar, bent on showing sport. Evidently an old gentleman of uncertain temper, crossed in love, perhaps, who had betaken himself, in cantankerous mood, far from the maddening herd, to bachelor quarters in the Red Road Jungle.

Paddy made a job at him, but, missing him, struck his spear heavily into the ground and rolled over, man and horse, alighting on all fours within a foot of piggy's snout. Piggy, so overcome with surprise at the unexpected sight, gallops off. Paddy picks himself up none the worse, though the ground is like iron, and we all urge on, the Waler now leading again.

We had got among crops over a mud wall or two, when a peculiar scent, reminding one of one's nursery days, filled the air. Piggy had disappeared into a tall crop of green bushes —a castor-oil field. Here the Waler lost ground and the Arab came up. With a thrill of rapture I, waiting on the outskirts, heard my Captain Sahib's joyful shout, and knew that he had taken first spear. A mere pin prick, piggy not a penny the worse, but enough for glory. Bravo, "*Rajah, Rajah*, staunch and true!"

The merry chase sped on. I galloped, he

galloped, we galloped all three. As pig-sticking countries go, this was by no means a typical one, not very rough, only an occasional *nullah* or dry crack in the ground, a miniature cañon, opening suddenly beneath the horse's forelegs of the unwary. For the most part it was crops; the only danger, open wells; and so it suited the Mighty One's Waler. It was he who rode piggy to a standstill, and when I came up I found him squatting in a mimosa patch under a prickly thorn—squatting defiantly on his haunches, snarling and foaming at the mouth.

Even the *Rajah*, the *Rajah* who has been known to bother the Captain Sahib by striking at a charging pig with his forefeet, did not quite seem to like the looks of him. It was Our Paddy who jumped off and dealt him on foot his quietus in that vulnerable spot where the spine joins the neck, and then the brave coolies all rushed in, and assisted to despatch the ruthless marauder of their crops.

When that horror was over I rode up to look at him. A fine grizzled old boar, weighing some hundred and fifty pounds, with bristles like wire, and tusks looking terrible, even in death, to the half-naked beater or the horse's flank, who might so easily have come within their reach.

I turned away. By the necromancy of the Mighty One, a table had arisen in the wilderness, not more than a mile or two off, and we were soon revelling in iced drinks and subsequently in breakfast.

We drove home as through a furnace. But little we cared; for what a morning we had had! Fox hunting is not in it with pig-sticking, as any one who has ever ridden spear in hand over an Indian *maidan* will agree. I marvel that in these days when, at the beginning of every season, there comes a chorus of dismal croakings from hunting men and the sporting papers about the decadence — nay, even the threatened extinction — of our national sport, I marvel that so few of them try pig-sticking. From all sides come rumours of M.F.H.'s giving up counties, and lamentations of hunt committees who are at their wit's end to replace them. Hard winters, dry springs, paucity of foxes, and superabundance of wire, go to heap up the woes of hunting men. They feel that they do not get enough fun for their money.

But when March dust begins to fly, and the "stinkin' wi-lets" pervade the sunny air, I, who have tried it, even vicariously, as it were, spearless, would bid them hie away eastwards to the land of the Tent Club, and go tilt a

spear against the great grey boar on the sun-baked plains of India. Now is the time, the lull of sport in England, the dreary days between the end of the hunting and the beginning of the shooting season. A two or three weeks' journey, by no means uninteresting in itself, lands you in the land of the spear. Once there, as a globe-trotter and a free agent, not the wretched official tied by the leg to one district, you choose your country, with due deference to your nerves and powers of "going," and also to your capability of enduring the heat. As for the latter, every year we learn better how to fight it. To the adult Englishman fresh from Europe, as yet unpoisoned by malaria, in these days of soda water and ice companies, of therm-antidotes and hygienic clothing, it forms no insuperable obstacle, especially if he can flee from it whenever he feels inclined. Common sense and abstemiousness will bring their rich reward in the utterly indescribable—to those who have never experienced them—joys of pig-sticking.

As to a "country," you pay your subscription and take your choice. The Calcutta Tent Club (so the "hunts" are called which preserve pig and arrange meets, etc.) is a veteran one, I believe nearly half a century old. The meets are few, and the country almost entirely heavy

high grass, but the sport makes up in quality what it lacks in quantity. Ahmedabad is, I think, the oldest tent club in India on the Bombay side. The country is not so difficult as some, and the sport is increasingly good. With the Poona Club you may toboggan over sheet rock in an open country, and get excellent sport with a long spear. Along the canal and river-bed regions of the Khánpúr, Delhi, Mirath, and Mathúra clubs, more in the north, you get splendid days, armed either with the long or the short weapon, and there is no scarcity of pig. At Láhor in the Panjáb, you will ride over tall grass and forest *ruhk* lands. In the Alláhábád and Morar country the going will be among treacherous cotton soil and over low rocky hills. Nearly everywhere you will find obstacles, not in the shape of regular fences so much as mud walls, on-and-off Irish banks, wells, ravines, water-courses. In March and April the largest clubs hold their pig-sticking competitions, such as the Ganges Cup and the Kadir Cup.

The open-air life, the combination of freedom, independence, and luxury — for tent clubs, which provide tents and catering at their meets, do it luxuriously—would make a pig-sticking trip most enjoyable. The

excitement is so great. There is, first, the tremendous tension of being "posted," as silent and motionless as possible, at some suitable spot where the pig will break covert. Then the fateful signal to "ride." There is a world of wood-craft and sport-lore in the word, as one pursues the boar lobbing across the plain at a pace so deceptive to the eye, and clearing obstacles, often hidden and unexpected, which test the powers of a good fencer. It is steeple-chasing, hunting hounds, and riding to hounds, all rolled into one. You have to "ride" your quarry, but you have to watch him, too, with as quick, yet steady, an eye as if you held a rifle instead of a spear. What is "'ware wheat" and "'ware wire" to "'ware" a deep rocky *nullah* suddenly opening beneath your horse's nose, an unsuspected, unprotected well, yawning in your face, or an innocent-looking patch of dark tilled soil revealing itself a perfect trap—melon-beds—into which you sink, horse and all, like the Master of Ravenswood?

What going across country in England can compare with the interest of a sudden, crafty *jink* on the part of the boar as you come up with him, or the wild excitement of the charge of the plucky beast, foaming, bristles erect, and which you meet with a spurt to your horse and

a downthrust of your spear? What so glorious as a neck-to-neck race with a fellow-sportsman for "first spear"? The wild boar of India can be the nastiest tempered beast alive, but he is so courageous, makes such a fight for his life, and dies so game—so difficult, so dangerous to despatch—that one cannot help admiring him after all.

Every year the communication with India grows more easy and quicker. Every year in England, apparently, men are willing to spend more money on hunters, moors, or pheasants. Every year they go further afield for sport. Surely the time will come when sportsmen will have a string of pig-stickers in the Kadir country, or run over for the Ganges Cup, much as they now take a house in Leicestershire or go to Scotland for the Twelfth.

YESTERDAY evening we drove round, through the Martinière Park, and wandered about the mansion of Constantia, "a sort of castle," says the Hon. Emily Eden, rapturous as usual, "in a fine, jungly park, built by an old General Martin, who came out to India a private soldier, and died worth a million. I wish we had come out in those days." It is the oldest European residence in Lakhnao, dating from the last decade of the eighteenth century, and takes its name from the motto on the coat of arms on the library ceiling, "Labor et Constantia."

Claud Martin was the son of a cooper at Lyons, who enlisted at sixteen, and went out to India as a dragoon under Lally, being shipwrecked *en route*, and who fought the English for ten years. After the capture of Pondicherry, "Claud Martin," says his friend Hawksworth, in the "East India Chronologist," "since so justly celebrated for his courtly manners, threw himself on the munificence of the English." A deserter, as his calumniators have averred, Martin could never have been. Otherwise he would have had no power to will away estates in France, as he did

at his death. The truth is that, when Clive had practically driven the French out of India, some of their troops were enrolled in the Company's service. Martin got a commission, came up northward in pursuit of the notorious Dyce Sombre, made friends with the Nawab Vizir of Oudh, and was allowed to settle as superintendent of his arsenal at Lakhnao, where he began to develop his two passions, speculation and education. He himself had shown taste for mathematics and science at the College of Lyons. We now find him helping a friend to send his boy to school at Calcutta, and subscribing to the Charity School Fund there.

Martin fought against Tippoo Sahib at Seringapatam, in charge of the commissariat, and it was during that Mysore campaign that he says that he "took particular notice of a sort of long grass which the cattle were voraciously fond of, which is of so strong and aromatic and pungent a taste that the flesh of the animals, as also the butter and milk, have a very strong scent of it." Of this he collected the seeds, and as the *Andropogon martini*, it is found in abundance round Lakhnao, notes Roxburgh in his "Flora Indiæ."

General Martin also introduced into Bengal the Mysore thorn, *Cæsalpina sepiaria*, for fences.

"This, when in full bloom, is ornamental, and well deserving a place in the gardens of all such as are fond of showy productions," he writes. "It also makes an excellent fence, and as such was much employed by Haider Ali in the bound-hedges of his forts."

Roxburgh says he also introduced into the Company's Botanical Garden at Calcutta the *Cordia latifolia* and *Ficus caricoides*, both up-country trees, as well as the *Andropogon miliaceus* and the *Artemisia elegans*. Further, he examined into indigo when in Madras, and is reputed to have made a great part of his wealth out of its cultivation in Bengal.

So, agriculturalist, gardener, commander-in-chief, and chief political adviser to the Nawab, architect, gunsmith, bell caster, ordnance founder, collector of engravings, educationalist, and a delightful, hospitable host, Martin lived to a green old age on the banks of the Gumti, building palaces and planting parks. Lord Teignmouth stayed with him in 1797 at the magnificent Farad Baksh, erected half on piles in the river, and "boats passed under the room in which we dined." The Farad Baksh was afterwards sold to the Nawab Vizir, and became the king's palace, on the splendours of which Miss Eden dilates.

Claud Martin's last years were saddened by the war in Europe between his native land and the race of his adoption. When the English merchants at Calcutta subscribed to aid England in her struggle against Napoleon, General Claud Martin did not join with them.

The mansion of Constantia was not finished at his death. Fearful lest Asufu-daulah, who, it is said, had offered one million sterling for the palace, should seize it when he was gone, the wily old general had himself buried in the basement, knowing no Mohammedan would venture to inhabit a mausoleum. At the Mutiny an ungrateful mob, unmindful of how much Lakhnao and Oudh had owed to him, broke open the tomb and scattered the bones. But these were reverently replaced by the British, and the figures which guard it repaired. In his latter days the old soldier's thoughts had turned, as a Frenchman's ever do, back to "*la belle France*," and the four French grenadiers still stand with drooping heads and reversed arms, keeping an eternal watch over their comrade, though the tapers for which the general left money, and which Lord Combemere's aide-de-camp saw burning in 1833, are now extinguished.

General Martin died worth forty lacs of rupees. Thirty years were spent proving his

will. Three nations benefited by it. In Lakhnao he freed his slaves, pensioned off numerous dependants, and left the Constantia as a school where boys were to be taught the English language and religion. Hundreds of poor European and Eurasian lads have cause to bless General Martin, and not only at Lakhnao. At Calcutta and Chandenagore he ordered Martinière colleges to be erected, and he did not forget the city of his birth. A Martinière stands at Lyons on the Saône, as well as on the Gumti and the Hooghli.

A very winning personality must have been his, judging from the bust on the façade of Constantia—a thin, powerful face, with large, deep-set eyes, and a strong nose. There is a picture of him on the walls of the Shah Najif by a native artist. General Martin, tall and slim, sits on a couch, clad in uniform coat and white ducks and black slippers, on his head a close white wig. He is watching a cock-fight, surrounded by Asufu-daulah and his court, and the British Resident. His friend, Hawksworth, wrote of him as "that brave, ambitious, fortunate, and munificent Frenchman." Warren Hastings calls him "a brave, experienced officer, and a man of strict honour."

The park of the Martinière is no longer

"jungly," but one of my favourite drives. The gardens and the whole demesne is now well kept up, as I am sure he would have wished it. When I pass the happy schoolboys in their white pith hats at play, I find it in my heart to forgive the old Lyonnais for the wonderful conglomeration of dome, arcade, terrace, and *rampe*, Moorish kiosque crowned by classical statues, round tower supported by rampant lions, Corinthian pilaster, and Tuscan column, in which he has housed them.

IN THE PARK OF THE MARTINIÈRE

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THE "Old Colonel" came to call yesterday, clad in his durzee-made *jhdran*, or duster, suit and *Terai* hat. For he is a perfect salamander and scorns a sun-helmet. He is quite one of the old *régime*, retired long ago, and wearing out his days in the land to which he gave his best years. He was horrified to find that I had made an expedition about the city on foot, dubbing it undignified in a *memsahib*, and hearing that I was planning such another, he offered to take me thither on an elephant. He has a nephew in the Commissariat, who is lord of the elephants, likewise of the camels and draught bullocks and mules, who are housed in a vast caravanserai, beyond the cantonments.

The elephant, "Lady Canning," over ten feet high, was awaiting us at the entrance to the Silver Street, where I prowled awhile to invest in Lakhnao silver-work. The "Old Colonel" had been in the final capture by Outram, and was a good guide. As we paced in solemn and stately fashion through the narrow and tortuous lanes, and on a level with the flat roofs of the mostly one-storied houses, he had many a tale to tell of the taking and the looting of the city.

"The rule was," said he, "that all treasure trove was to be handed in to the prize-agents, but it was a rule more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Looting was too ticklish and dangerous work to be carried on alone, and the men, aye, and the officers too, generally hunted in couples. They rambled through the deserted houses, easily passing from one to another across the flat roofs. There was always the risk of coming across the rightful owner, who, if he found his unwelcome visitor unaccompanied, would naturally not have thought twice about putting a bullet through his head or a knife through his heart. Then there were *tykhanas*, or underground cellars, to be searched, and the space beneath the stairs, which often contained a cupboard, mostly cemented up as if to defy detection. A knock or two would reveal the secret by the hollow sound, and then, with the aid of the nearest piece of wood or iron, an entrance would be effected into the *cache*, sometimes to unearth real treasure, but more often to find the articles were valuable only in the eyes of the late occupier and his family."

"A sealed-up house was the most valuable find which fell to the looter," my old informant confided to me. "That meant a house which

had every entrance cemented up as if to deceive the spoiler. A casual passer-by might imagine that the blank wall belonged only to a house with its entrance in the street at the rear. The irregularity of Indian buildings made this very probable, for houses of rich and poor are huddled together anyhow. So it might occur that the looter, hurrying on, would leave behind him, within a few yards, treasures of great value. But when the secret of sealed-up houses was discovered, the soldiers would work in a gang, one above passing from house to house, the others below, rear and front, making good every side till they found the door. When they could find none, the looters came to the joyous conclusion that the house had not yet been broken into, and it did not take long to effect an entrance and to lock themselves up safely inside. It was an exciting moment, that inspection, the "Old Colonel" said, and he could remember as clearly as yesterday one sealed house into which he and a friend broke. There was not much jewellery in it, but plenty of portable property to appropriate. Especially did he recollect that the *charpoys* (native bedsteads) had their legs coated with silver. They calmly cut it off with their pocket knives, and next day melted it

into the form of small bricks, the better to carry it.

Another way of securing property against marauders was the putting it down the wells. But natives were often glad to rob their relatives if they might share in the spoil. Much treasure was buried as were King Theebaw's jewels during the Burmese war. If this was supposed to be the case the water test was immediately resorted to. It consisted in a *mussak*, or goatskin, full of water, being poured over the spot where the things were supposed to be buried. If the soil had been excavated the result would be an immediate if slight subsidence, which would be a sufficient inducement to begin digging. It was discovered that, however well the earth was rammed down, water would always make it lie closer still. Of course, occasionally, the treasure was only such in name and not worth the trouble. The "Old Colonel" told me he had once spent half a day watching some such unearthing at the instigation of a native, and only to light upon a number of copper cooking pots.

The palace in "Cæsar's Garden" especially, said the "Old Colonel," was a veritable mine of wealth when our troops captured it, and many was the officer who was the richer by

much jewellery and pearls when he quitted, than when he entered it, while the valuable Kashmir shawls were literally piled in the arcades.

But there was a gruesome side to all looting. Sometimes the spoiler pushed open a door, revolver in hand, only to find a decomposed corpse behind it, the sight and smell of which haunted him for days after.

As we paced through the city I must confess that I thought the "Old Colonel" right, and that I was much better raised above the seething crowd below; also, I could the better study—

> "The gamut of face tints
> That ranges from yellow to tar,
> The pavement mosaic of face tints
> That mottles the *Sudder* Bazaar,"

and the variegated clothing (or absence of it), and inhale less of the awful essence of condensed unwashed humanity, which assailed my olfactory nerves. Every now and again we were brought to a stop in our progress by the passing of an *ekka*—

> "A tea-tray on wheels, dear,
> Flies past as its occupants sit,
> Since a pony, you know, never feels, dear,
> All five tugging hard at its bit."

Or a palanquin blocked the way, and between

its curtains one had a vision of an obese baboo, or the half-concealed inmates of some zenana, seeing, but not being seen.

Once we came to a standstill to allow the passage of one of those—

> "Staid bulls, beloved of the Brahmin,
> Stroll round taking food as they go."

Above, peering down on us, full of demoniacal wickedness, is the ubiquitous crow (does not Zaminchus say that devils assume divers forms, "sometimes those of cats and crows"), and the brown bazaar monkey, as licensed a thief as the humped-bull aforementioned, and whom no householder would dream of killing, however many ghee-smeared *chappattis* (dough cakes), or silver bangles, he pilfered when no one was looking.

# MAY

"The sun burns ever, the plain lies bare."

# MAY

WHEN Barnefield in his "Divers Humours" wrote, in 1598, of the "Merrie month of May," and Shakespeare, a little later, in his "Passionate Pilgrim," cribbed the quotation without acknowledgment, they little realized what a mockery their words would seem to their unhappy country people in India a couple of centuries later. But I can quite sympathize with the youths and maidens of Rome who, according to Polydore Virgil, took a day out in the fields on the Calends of May, and spent it in singing and dancing in honour of Flora, the goddess of fruit and flower. For I, too, could have held festival of rejoicing over the tropical luxuriance of my garden, only, unfortunately, we observed May Day by having a dust-storm! The day was dark, and close, and cloudy. The "plain was a furnace hot as hell." Suddenly, as the sun sank, a brown cloud rose swiftly higher and higher in the west. With an ever-increasing howl came the wind, nearer and nearer, like some fell demon about to swoop. Before it drove the birds in

flocks, helpless, drifting, rudderless, making for the nearest shelter, as a lurid wall of dust rose, apparently hundreds of feet high. Then—swish !—with a roar came the wind through the tree-tops, which swayed and bowed, and almost flattened. One minute, and the bungalow was enveloped with an impenetrable cloud of the finest dust. The doors burst open, or banged to, the servants shouted, the horses neighed. Everything was hidden in mysterious murk, an Egyptian darkness that literally could be felt. In the house it was "Dark ! dark ! dark ! amid the blaze of noon"—so dark that we lighted candles ; I could see no further than a yard into the verandah ; beyond was a mere brown blur of bent trees. It all came up in a quarter of an hour.

The hurricane passed on. In two hours the world was quite still and clear, and felt almost cold. Only the verandah was full of dead leaves, and the half-written mail letter on the drawing-room writing-table was coated with fine dust.

The Captain Sahib and a friend were riding down the Mall when the storm burst. They turned the heads of the terrified horses into a hedge close by. For some minutes neither could see the other for the cloud of dust.

After the dust storm it was perceptibly

cooler, and after the dust came "the thunder-storm against the wind." The clouds reverberated and burst, and the lightning, as the Mosaic biographer so forcibly puts it, literally "ran along the ground."

MAY was ever the month of love, and the idyll I have been watching has now been played to its close. In other words, Belinda has made up her mind. She has given her "promise of May." With the true grit and pluck of the British girl, she is going to do her share of empire-making. Away to the winds has she thrown the prospect of a season in the hills, likewise of young Sabretasche's ancestral acres in Loamshire. Captain Fewse, and a possible political future at the War Office, she has also declined; and the nice boy in the Scilly Islanders, who had nothing to offer but his honest heart, goes out stalking black buck o'er the *maidan* at noonday, which is almost equivalent to suicide. For myself, I have to listen, through the sultry hours in the privacy of her bedroom, and in the airiest of *déshabille*, to Belinda's rhapsodies over the *stunt Sahib* of her choice. He is six feet one and a half, is the Assistant Magistrate. But that is how the natives clip his official title.

Belinda's mother is happy. For her prophetic soul perceives in her prospective son-in-law a K.C.S.I., and a possible apotheosis to Simla. But, in between, as I cannot help picturing to

myself with a sigh, will lie Belinda's best years, and how spent?

"Sing a song of sixpence
Purchased with our lives,
Decent English gentlemen
Roasting with their wives,
In the plains of India,
Where like flies they die."

Belinda's pretty colour will fade, and she will grow too languid for one of her youth. As time goes on her life will be carved out with partings—partings with husband, partings with children—with the latter, possibly, in the saddest sense.

"Thou hast tracked him with duns and diseases,
And he lies, as the scorching winds blow,
Recollecting old England's sea-breezes,
On his back in a lone bungalow.
And the slow-coming darkness repining,
How he girds at the sun till it sets,
As he marks the long shadows declining
O'er the land of regrets."

The *stunt Sahib* is a rare good fellow, one in a thousand. But I cannot help feeling that my beautiful Belinda has been sacrificed.

"Ave Imperium, morituri te salutant!"

WILL it weary if I continue to prate of the heat? A slight alleviation is the coming of the mango.

"The koel is come, glad news to bring;
On the blossoming mango he rests his wing.
Though its hues may be dull, it is sweet, oh! sweet,
And its shade and its fruit the wanderer greet."

There is a pretty Hindoo legend of how Kana, the Cupid of Indian mythology, shot in vain his arrows, "blossomed barbed," against Shiva, "the awful god," till, finally, with a laugh, he drew forth his last, the mango-headed arrow, and—

"Oh! sharp is the arrowy blossom's smart,
For the mango flower ne'er missed the heart,
And the work of the gods is fairly done,
And help shall arise out of Shiva's son."

We do not eat the mangos out of our own garden. They are only of the rough ungrafted kind, which is sour and turpentiny in flavour, pretty and delusive, with its scarlet cheeks striped with green. That crop we have sold to the *malli*, but it strikes me that he is not guarding it well, for in this weather even the native "Epicurus in his garden was languid.

The birds of the air have had more enjoyment of their food."

The natives eat the rough mango, which abounds everywhere, planted along the roadside, or in carefully planned *topes*, or groves, over the plain. The sahib devours the grafted kind, a glorious luscious yellow fruit, the size of a goodly pear, and devours it, for choice, in his bath. For the mango is a most difficult fruit to eat gracefully. I have iced mango fool going at every meal. It is as good as gooseberry fool, and in a large place like this, with a good ice-factory, there is no difficulty about the ice. The native cooks excel at making ice-pudding, and all food has to be kept in ice.

All the world knows how good mango chutney is, the only snack of this luscious fruit the poor home-staying Britisher ever tastes.

How one revels in the abundant fruit at this season, the—

> "Fruit of all kinds,
> Rough or smooth, rind, and bearded husk in shell."

Were we Moslims we should become most fruitful in deeds of charity. For they say that to eat one melon produces a thousand good works. If so, with me they are labours of

love; for I deem it is a most delicious fruit. Why in all ages the refreshing melon should have been a term of reproach I cannot imagine. Tertullian says of Marcion, the heresiarch, that "he has a pumpkin (*pep'onem*) in place of a heart."

Thersites, the railer, called the Hellenes pumpkins (*pop'onës*). *Être un melon*, in the French of to-day, is to be dull of comprehension, or "soft." *Avoir un cœur de melon*, or *de citronaille*, means to have no heart at all. The new-comers at St. Cyr are called "*les melons*," meaning that they come from a hot-bed and are delicate. But we who feel an Indian thirst have more respect for a melon than the classics or the moderns, and we gloat over them, flesh and water, pink and green, grown in the *Kala muti*, or black earth, extra rich soil by the well. Twice a day, at breakfast and at dessert, we have our melon lottery and plunge. For one never knows till one cuts it how a melon is going to turn out, witness the Spanish proverb—

> "Choosing a melon or maid by the rind,
> A man who has eyes is no better than blind."

The English cucumber is still with us for awhile, and the *bhoota*, or India corn, has ripened.

Before it ripens it makes a delicious savoury, boiled, and then fried on toast with butter. But the more primitive method is to roast the fruit whole, smear it while hot with butter, and, holding it in both hands, gnaw the grains off! Either way *bhoota* is most seductive.

Custard apples are now abundant. They are the size of an English apple, their sweet and luscious pippy pulp granulated outside as with an armour of stone.

There is an abundance of dessert at every meal, and often one's flagging appetite can be tempted by nothing else.

*Annanas*, as the natives (from the French) call pineapple, are brought to us from the Botanical Gardens, where they are grown under the shade of the mangoes. Our own guavas are ripe, a fruit like an inverted pear, rough to eat raw, but making excellent fritters, and if there is a thing the native cook excels in, it is frying. It is quite miraculous the dinners they contrive to dish up, squatting over the mud-brick stove and fanning the charcoal with a palm-leaf fan. For baking they insert a closed iron box into one of the holes round the stove, covering the box with hot embers, and closing the aperture with an iron sheet. I have tried making guava jelly, but it was not equal to

that which in England comes to us from the West Indies.

*Loquâts* are now abundant. It is a grafted fruit like a very large white-heart cherry, red on one cheek and yellow on the other, but with more than its fair share of stone. *Lichi* is another odd fruit, with a prickly brown shell like a small horse-chestnut, but inside such a transparent fragrant flesh. Then there are the pommelos, which only the natives eat, and pomegranates, which are such a delusion. Imagine a beautiful tree with shining dark green leaf and scarlet bloom; hidden in the leaves a gloriously tinted fruit, but tasting only of little stones and bitter rind.

Further, we have with us now the pumpkin, or *Kadu*. *Petha* (*Benincasa cerifera*) is a large pumpkin; when boiled and flavoured with rose-water or essence, and crystallized with syrup, it makes the popular Delhi sweetmeat. But I cannot away with these native cloying bonbons. Lastly, the figs are ripe.

> "I, who am so little among trees,
> In honey-making mate the bees."

But William Morris sings of the European fig. I have no fig trees in my garden. It is not large enough. So the Captain Sahib, who has

the passion for green figs noticeable in some folk, has bought the crop in the Padre Sahib's fig-garden, a veritable orchard, and eats his fill. For it would appear that if you like green figs you are hardly ever able to get enough of them. He is of opinion that, barring the mango, the fig is the best fruit in India. In the parson's garden the trees stand eight or ten feet high, with strong trunks and overhanging arms all round, trained so that the fig lover can pull them with ease.

After the fruit, drinking is one of the housekeeper's most serious questions of the day, aye, and of the night, too; for the nights are becoming very hard to bear. But let not my temperance brother or sister have a shock. There is much less drinking in India now than in the bad old pre-railway days, when breweries and ice manufactories and soda-water machines were unknown. In the British army the temperance movement, fostered exceedingly by Lord Roberts during his term of office as Commander-in-Chief, is now very strong. The officers and the men who go in much for athletics and sport and the consequent necessary training, find temperance very essential. How different this to the bygone days the "Old Colonel" was yarning about, when he joined

and got some twelve steps in promotion in two years owing to his senior's dipsomaniac proclivities!

But in the hot weather, when the hot wind parches every pore in one's skin, the imbibing of much liquid—soda-water, quinine tonic (soda and quinine), lemonade, milk and soda, etc., etc.—both night and day, is a necessity. Nature kindly provides limes in abundance at this season. We have some sour lime trees in the garden, and I find them more efficacious in quenching thirst when mixed with soda-water than the sweet kind. The trees grow about twelve feet high, and the fruit is hard and green, the size of a golf ball.

MY garden has been the scene of unwonted festivities. For two entire nights and days we have suffered from a wedding in the compound. My *ayah* has been marrying off her only child, Sakhina, aged ten, a plain little mortal, who has been wont to haunt my bedroom verandah when her mother was busy over her vocation within. Matchmaking in the East, though materially assisted, I believe, by the official agent, is by no means crowned with success, as with us, when the happy day has been fixed. *Ayah* had many difficulties to surmount and preliminaries to arrange. In the first place, she borrowed of me three months' pay, about £3. Natives often cripple themselves for years by nuptial festivities. Then she had to obtain permission from the magistrate, the colonel, and ourselves, for the merry-making to be held in our compound, for everybody and everything in cantonment seems under martial law, as it were. One may not put up a chicken house without leave. Much less may the natives hold a *tamasha* (festivity) with its accompanying din. Finally, a *shemianah*, or awning, was hired, and erected in a waste corner near the stables and the

servants' huts. After dinner we were invited to go and look at the dancing. We found assembled a crowd of servants and bazaar folk, everybody's "uncles and cousins and aunts," *more* Hindoo. Our bearer brought two arm-chairs. Another functionary spread a carpet, and we installed ourselves in the place of honour among the audience to watch the gyrations of a couple of *nautch*-girls in very diaphanous and gaudy muslin. Certainly *ayah* did the thing in style. These ladies were hired at as much as seven rupees a night. It was even as when one secures a Covent Garden star for an "at home" in the London season! In a slow, luscious, snake-like manner, the dancing was really very pretty and graceful. It consisted less in steps than in posturing and in movements of the hips and arms. But, after awhile, it waxed exceedingly boring.

The bridegroom was the hero of the evening. He was an ill-favoured young man about thirty, who squatted cross-legged, surveying the *nautch*, clad in scarlet and other delights, and his face nearly hidden in white flowers. Two men brought us his trousseau in a basket and exhibited it with much pride. It consisted chiefly of pale pink muslin jackets and knicker-bockers. I promptly recognized the material of

which they were made. It was that of my old discarded window curtains and toilet table drapery, which had passed through the dye pot and assumed some of the soft art tints the natives are so clever at evolving. The bridegroom was dressed up and exhibited, but we wanted to see the poor little bride. She had been crying, we were told, for two or three days past in anticipation of the suspicious occasion. We found her in one of the little mud hovels which was assigned to her mother in the row of servants' huts. As it was much too gloomy inside to see her properly, they threw a white muslin veil over her (another of my old curtains) and brought her forth in a woman's arms.

About ten o'clock we went indoors to bed, though I cannot say we slept. At three in the morning began the wedding breakfast, for once in a way, a correct designation! It consisted of a whole sheep, of unlimited unleavened cakes, and a princely quantity of arrack. An orchestra was provided in the shape of a tom-tom, which seemed never to cease, and two sorts of fiddles. Altogether, as the society newspapers would say with us, the whole affair was done regardless of expense, and set me wondering in what form of perquisites *ayah* will seek to recoup herself for the outlay. I must keep an

extra sharp look-out on my wardrobe and my trinkets.

The following day, Sakhina was removed to her husband's village, borne in a red-curtained *dhooli*, but subsequently was brought back again. In three years' time she will return thither for good, and be incarcerated for life in her husband's back yard. For it is a good match ; he is headman of his village, a sort of small farmer, and she will be a *purdah* woman. I fear she will often look back with regret to her childhood's days in my garden, where she ran wild and free, keeping the servants' depredating goat out of arm's length of the *malli's* stick.

Poor little, brown Sakhina of the straight, oily locks, my mind forebodes me for you ! But Sakhina, full of the superstitions of her own, recks not of the evil reputation of May as a marrying month, even in Ovid's day—

"Mense malas Maio nubere vulgus ait."

Few Western maidens have the courage to fly in the face of old proverbs—

"Marry in May is to wed povertaie."

"Marry in May, you'll soon be laid in clay."

"Marry in May, you'll rue the day."

May is the month of Mary, but its name is

more probably derived from the Latin "Maius, to grow," than from Maia, the mother of Mercury. In most European languages, as with the Dutch, who call it "Blon Maaud," it is the "blossom month." The Roman Lemuralia, or Feasts of the Dead, were held in May. Old prejudices die hard. The early Christians clung, perhaps almost unconsciously, to many of the old beliefs, and even when the mediæval church dedicated the month to the Blessed Virgin, and the weird associations of the pagan festival were renewed, the people went on believing that to marry in May was to wed in a time of national mourning. Sakhina cares for none of these things. But Belinda's wedding is not to take place till June.

THE hot wind has withered up my poor roses, and it has been quite a business cutting off the dead heads.

"Rose, elle a vécu ce qui vivent les roses
L'espace d'un matin."

Ida has carried off my geraniums with her to the hills. Would that I had gone with them!

Quite an occupation for me in the very early morning lately, on returning from my ride, has been the standing over the *malli* and seeing him take the cuttings of the poinsettias, *tabernæmontana*, *tecomas*, hibiscus, and layer the bougainvillas.

My *daturas* (with which native wives manufacture a poison for undesirable husbands) are very handsome now, two or three feet high, with large trumpet-shaped fragrant flowers of pink and white, purple, white, and golden yellow.

The *lagerstroemia*, or crape-tree bush, is a mass of delicate pink flowers, and the *chândree*, or moonbeam jasmine (*tabernæmontana*), is beautiful with its snow-white flowers, and the *Allamanda neriifolia*, with yellow cups in its dark green oleander-like leaves. It does very

well here, as we never get any frost in the cold weather.

Down the Mall, the *Cassia fistula* has been gorgeous with showers of pale, or lemon yellow blooms on its leafless boughs. The millingtonia trees are sending up suckers from the root, and I am planting some out separately.

# JUNE

" And the day shall have a sun
That shall make thee wish it done."

# JUNE

TO-DAY we have married off Belinda, beautiful, though white as her wedding-dress from Calcutta. We married her at 6 p.m. Even then the heat seemed unbearable. The hot wind scorched one's lungs, and the world seemed one vast furnace-blast as one drove to church. She was married under the waving punkah, with an accompaniment of the whirl of the therm-antidote fixed behind the altar. Our Padre Sahib fanned himself the while with a palm-leaf. I myself found the punkahs detracted a little from the solemnity of the service—punkahs everywhere, over each seat, pulpit, reading-desk, and in the chancel. My attention was further diverted by the peregrinations of the toads, which, encouraged by the wet coolness engendered of the therm-antidote and the *tattis* in the doorways, likewise attended the ceremony, hopping up and down the chancel-steps, to the great delectation of the whitey-brown choir-boys from the Martinière College. They tell me Belinda looked sweet, but I only caught

fitful glimpses of her between the white swingings of the punkah.

We toasted them in the wine of France, and feasted on oysters from Bombay, and the Alsatian goose's liver; we strewed the drive with my most gay and gaudy blooms as her *stunt Sahib* drove her off in his dog-cart, down the darkening Mall, across the sluggish, shrunken river, over the plain, to the old white palace in the mango grove, deserted since the battle, save by honey-mooning couples of the conquerors.

"A GREAT length of deadly days," has begun—deadlier than Swinburne wot of. To-day it was 114° in the shady verandah, and despite all my care and appliances, never less than 95° in the rooms.

From seven in the morning till eight in the evening I have the house closely shut up. It is dark and dismal. I loll about in a loose white muslin dressing-gown, unable to sleep much, growing weary of reading. There are no callers, for the place is very empty. Every one who can, has got away.

To-day, for a wonder, there was no wind. Instead, a breathless, suffocating heat, with a thick overpowering haze, night and morning. When the wind does not blow the *tattis* will not work. So the state of a room unblessed by a therm-antidote may be more easily imagined than described.

The evening drive is such a delusion. Clad in a loose muslin dress I drive out at 6.30. Happily, in India, there is not so much difference in length of the day at different seasons. What would a long English June day be like?

When the carriage stops at the bandstand, one feels as if sitting close in front of a big

kitchen fire. After dinner we camp out on the drive in long chairs, and the heat of the thick darkness seems almost tangible. Yet, all this while, the other sex lives and moves and has its being—on very early morning parades, in stuffy court houses all through the hottest hours, on the war-path after black buck over the plain at noon, on the tennis court, or the polo ground at sundown. But we women-folk seem simply to exist. And hardly that. What of the children ?

The nights are even more unbearable than the days. The room is 95°. Under one the bed burns like hot bricks. Only a strip of Chinese matting on the top of the mattress makes it endurable. I lie prone with ice on my head, and get up and wander in the garden, amid the overpowering whirl of the cicalas.

Some wretched folk are tortured with prickly heat at this season. It breaks out all over the body, surely the most irritating complaint ever mortal flesh was heir to ! It is supposed to ward off fever. But some people get fever too !

At last, the first faint glimmer in the east, which the orientals call the "false dawn," has been succeeded by a yet deeper spell of darkness, which, in its turn, has given place to

unmistakably coming twilight, and the "stillest hour of night and day." I rise, about 4.30 a.m., don a white cotton riding habit, and sip my tea in the verandah, a long-handled palm-leaf fan waved over me.

> "Now fades the last
> Star to the East, a mystic breathing comes,
> And all the leaves once quivered and were still.
> It is the first, faint stir of the dawn.
> So still it is that we might almost hear
> The sigh of all the sleepers in the world."

This is the only hour of the twenty-four at which I can now enjoy my garden. Yet the flowers and creepers are beautiful. Anything more lovely, for instance, than the tone of the colour of the sky-blue *ipomea*, the *cærulla*, a blue convolvulus, eight feet high, cannot well be imagined.

The pacing of the *Rajah* breaks the hush. I mount the smooth-paced Arab, and jog round the gray and hazy racecourse.

But the hour is so short. Up comes the sun—a fiery ball in the east—and, with it, the hot winds.

"The sun beats aflame on your faces." You are hunted indoors to the haven of the therm-antidote.

Forthwith the station becomes deserted.

The very natives fly to their huts—*they* can always sleep—and the dust-devils are left in possession of the road outside—the glaring, flaring, shimmering road—and whirl up and down, whipping up dust and straw and dead leaves into a veritable *Danse Macabre.*

LAST night, unable to endure any longer the weariness which cannot sleep, I got up and wandered into the garden. It was one of those nights which are among the most glorious things in this country—

> "The moon above, with its full-orbed lustre,
> Lifting the veil of the slumberous land."

The "hare in the moon," as the Hindoos say, instead of the "man in the moon," gazed down upon me so brilliantly that I could have seen to read. Yet the shadows were inky black: Nature robed in a golden vesture patched with black velvet. A long cane chair, forgotten overnight, stood at the foot of the verandah steps. I let myself sink into it and lay quite still.

Suddenly, something grey seemed to slink between me and the deep dark of the orange grove—something larger than a pariah dog, more dignified than a jackal, yet with slouching gait and tail carried low. It turned and looked on me as it passed. I thought I saw a fang gleam in the moonlight.

The wolf, *ryot* legends tell, strikes dumb

those on whom, in the moonlight, it turns its face. Also Virgil—

> " Vox quoque Moerim
> Jam fugit ipsa ; lupi Moerim vid're prio'res."

Thus far, however, I have escaped. " Wolf madness " has not yet supervened, as the groom can testify, when, an hour or two later, I went to the stables to mount, and found him stealing the *Rajah's* forage.

The Wild Man of the Woods, pitying my parched condition, has sent me a present of wild apricots from his beloved Himalayan forests. I am half tempted to try with them a quaint old recipe I lighted on the other day in a cookery book, dated before 1656, entitled " To make Jumbals of Apricocks or Quinces."

" Take apricocks or quinces, and coddle them tender ; then take their pulps and dry it in a dish over a chafing dish of coals and set it in a store for a day or two ; then beat it in a stone mortar, putting in as much sugar as will make a stiffe paste ; then colour it with Saunders' cochinele, or blue starch, and make it up in what colour you please ; rowl them with battle-dores into long pieces, and tie them up in knots, and so dry them."

A trifle involved, and also a little tiring at

this season to "rowl with battle-dores." But the temptation to try the recipe out here is strong, for old Gerard in his "Generalle Historie of Plantes," 1633, says of the Saunders' tree—

"It cometh from the East Indies, and is much used for its red colour. It has a fruit the bignesse of a cherrie, which falleth in the winde."

I have not a notion what the old fellow is alluding to, but I feel an irresistible desire to go on the quest of the "Saunders' tree"—when the thermometer is lower.

There is little to be done in the garden when now the hot winds hold their saturnalia. All my poor verandah ferns and palms and tender things have been hidden away in the thickest shade, with saucers under them kept perpetually full of water. The beds in the garden are being got ready for the rainy season show; the cuttings of *ipomeas*, convolvulus, zinnias, and marigolds have been put in, and I have some balsams sown.

"Up to the hills I lift mine eyes, from whence cometh my salvation."

ANOTHER night of horror, but joy has come in the morning! For the Captain Sahib has got his leave, and we are off to the hills! What that means can be better imagined than described. But the journey has no terrors for me, for does not the Terrestrial Paradise lie beyond it?

*Dusk.*—The thermometer in the oven of a railway station, 120°. One's throbbing brain, addled from sleepiness that cannot sleep, has scarcely been able to grapple with the time-table. Yet a languid feeling of joy pervades one as one gets into the train, mingled with an equally languid pity for those who are always left behind. I mean those railway employés whose lives are spent in the hot brick barracks that cluster round every large station, or in flying through the furnace air in black holes of brake vans, or on gridirons of engines. No wonder some die in harness every hot weather of heat apoplexy and the like.

The Padre Sahib, when he called to wish us good-bye, cheerfully told us he had buried yesterday two heat apoplexy cases out of the

train, and begged the Captain Sahib to take care of me. It is very unusual for Europeans, and especially women, to risk the long journey in June, before the rains fall to mitigate the heat.

But courage. We are armed with a box full of ice and soda-water bottles. Wet towels envelop my head as I lie, clad in a white dressing-gown, on the pillows the bearer has arranged on the long leather-covered seat.

One lies gasping, too feeble almost to agitate the little palm fan in one's hands, praying for the starting of the train, and with it the machine punkah. An odd feeling oppresses one's head, as if an iron band were being slowly tightened round it. That way lies heat apoplexy. The burning sirocco tears down under the corrugated iron roof of the station, and every breath one draws scorches one's lungs.

I never heard a more blessed sound than the blue cotton-coated coolie clanging on the bar of iron that does duty for a bell. The train moves, and at last, outside, silence. The jabbering of the natives is hushed. They and their moving bundles of clothes, their wives, have been pushed forcibly into their proper compartments—fourth class, and purdah. The baboo station-master's and the whitey-brown guard's *chee-chee* has ceased. It seems almost

too rapturous to be true. We are really off to the hills, rumbling along through a night dark as Erebus, and as suffocating as the sulphurous pit. At intervals the lights of mud villages twinkle through the gloom, and occasionally there comes another awful pause at a station, more jostling, jabbering native travellers, more frantic shouts for water, more clanging of bells. That night will ever remain in my memory as an awful nightmare: for Indian trains are slow, the stoppages numerous, and the number of natives who seem to want to travel surpasses belief.

After several hours of torture an unkind dawn reveals the thirsty, gasping land in all its ugliness. The "plains all bare save the shadow of death." It also shows me how begrimed I am with dust. Then there came a blessed half-hour, just a suspicion of coolness. I think I slept.

But all too soon I am again conscious of our Tyrant. The dreaded sun is up. For the next twelve hours he has us in his clutches, and turns us into mere gasping forms of burning flesh, too exhausted even to think. It is really quite an effort, but an effort well repaid, when at sunset one looks out to see in the East a cloudy outline fringing the copper sky. Now, if never

before, did one feel the glad yearning of the Psalmist. "Up to the hills I lift my eyes, from whence cometh my salvation."

But there is more to be got through. To a day spent in an oasis of cool, a friend's bungalow, stretched under the therm-antidote, succeeds a hideous night jolted like a pill in a pill box in a *dâk gharry*. This instrument of torture is like nothing so much as a bathing-machine, inside which one's bearer spreads the pillows and rugs without which no European travels, and in which one is rattled along at full length, the driver perched in front, one's domestics and goods and chattels heaped on the roof. The result, top-heaviness, painfully apparent when the relays of melancholy ponies, tied in by an arrangement of ropes, are induced afresh at every stage by the driver and his satellites into an irregular gallop. A merciful darkness hides from one's enfeebled nerves the yawning ditches on either hand, as one lurches on through the night, pursued by a pillar of dust.

It grows distinctly cooler, for we are in the Terai. This is the wide strip of jungle and forest which lies at the foot of the great mountains, a dread tract—

> "Faint with the fierce disease
> Of the deadly jungle swamp,"

at once the Paradise of the sportsman and the Lair of the Fever Fiend, who strikes down those who, at certain seasons, venture to penetrate into his Forbidden Land.

But the night passes—

> "In the light of day
> Is a mighty mountain dim and grey,
> Which between the earth and sky doth lay,"

barring one's progress. Presently dark shapes rise also on either hand, and the road comes suddenly to an end. One is at the very foot of the hills.

The dim light is full of cool freshness, the delightful, long-missed sounds of chirping birds and of running waters—

> "The rippled feet and the eddying fall
> Of a snow-fed river cool and creaming."

And now the male traveller bestrides a pony, while she of the weaker sex is borne aloft *à la* Guy Fawkes, in a *jampan* (armchair with poles), on men's shoulders. With every step the air grows more champagne-like. The sun peeping over the forest-clad peaks flickers the stony path. You actually welcome his appearing, buttoning your coat, and, for the first time for many a long week, think wistfully of breakfast.

What a difference a mile or two has made!

One is really in the hills! The Himalayas come down so sheer to the plains that it is almost possible to determine the exact spot where they rise. And what a shape, what a contour, has this, the youngest of mountain ranges!

The path winds upwards under stately deodars and hoary ilex, flanked by tall rhododendron trees dyeing the hillside crimson. Down the gorge to the right tumbles the river, half hidden by granite precipices, and a crowd of tiny unseen torrents and waterfalls answer it from the hills around. Peak after peak of purple mountain opens up before one.

"Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise."

The koel calls cuckoo-like across the valley. The cowbells jingle from upland pastures.

Excelsior! with many a whack and imprecation on the part of its attendant, hanging on to the tail of the sturdy hill pony. Onward and upward, what though the dandy bearers puff, perspire, and grunt. (And these hill folk only wash once a year, on their holiest festival!)

Far, far below and behind, lie the hated plains, shimmering in the haze of heat, with broad, white river-beds and dark patches of forest.

Excelsior! Little white specks of houses shine out on the mountain-side. A series of interminable zigzags, a turn into the cup-like valley, and one has gained the Terrestrial Paradise!

IDA has found a house for us. "You will miss your garden," quoth she, as she introduced us to the little châlet, perched on the steep hillside, a tiny terrace cut out in front, wide enough to turn a *jampan* in.

But what care I? The world spread out before me, fold upon fold of mountain, green and beautiful, is one wide garden.

A sheer drop from the terrace I look down upon a gnarled old ilex, groaning under hanging orchids, mauve and white, dressed from head to bole with moss and feathered with parsley fern.

"Bearded with moss and in garments green
Stands like the Druids of old,
Stands, like harper hoary, with beard that rests on its bosom."

The shady cleft in the hillside behind the house is clothed with hart's tongue, polypodium, and male fern; a little further on, where the slope is less steep, spreads a carpet of maidenhair and silver fern, dotted with pale pink begonias, and the graceful wild ginger scents the air with its lily-like flowers.

Ida has smothered the wee drawing-room,

and the dinner-table, in roses and tuberoses, and gladiolus, and with this wealth of ferns no room can look mean.

The rosy rhododendrons are passing away, and their fallen petals dye blood-red our little approach—drive I cannot call it, where wheels are unknown.

Some bygone tenant must have tried to garden the tiny terrace, for convolvulus, nasturtiums, and single dahlias are running rampant over the wall.

A great sun is sinking over the Terai in a glory of crimson and gold. Mysterious lights and shadows are flitting over mountain and forest and gorge—

> "Where the mighty cliffs are frowning
> Far o'er the torrent's fall,
> And the pine and the oak stand crowning
> The ridges . . ."

As I drink my fill of so much beauty, my eye falls again on the dahlia bank, and Maund's words come back to me—

"The dahlia becomes an object of interest to every one who possesses a garden, unless that person be one whose mind is so chained down to Mother Earth that he never can raise an eye of satisfaction upon the beauties of her vegetable kingdom. These pourtray too much

happiness, too much of a spontaneous loveliness of Nature to meet ever the placid contemplation of some few — very few — morbific souls."

THE END

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